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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

MICHAEL G. PORTO (a.k.a. GUY MICHAELS)	:	
	:	
Plaintiff,	:	Civil Action No. 08 Civ. 1228 (LTS)(GWG)
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS, LABYRINTH	:	DECLARATION OF
THEATER COMPANY, PHILIP SEYMOUR	:	ADAM D. SIEGARTEL
HOFFMAN, FABER AND FABER, INC., AND	:	
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.,	:	
	:	
Defendants.	:	
	:	

ADAM D. SIEGARTEL declares:

1. I am an attorney at Proskauer Rose LLP, attorneys for defendants, and a member of the bar of this Court. I submit this declaration in support of defendants' motion pursuant to Rules 12(b)(6) and 56, Fed. R. Civ. P., to dismiss or in the alternative for summary judgment, and in support of defendants' motion for an award of costs and attorneys' fees under 17 U.S.C. § 505. This declaration is submitted for the limited purpose of attaching pleadings, documents, and a DVD that are relevant to defendants' motion.

2. Attached as Exhibit 1 is a true copy of plaintiff's Amended Complaint in its entirety, including all exhibits. Attached as Exhibit A to this Amended Complaint is plaintiff's

book *Judas on Appeal*. Published versions of defendants' play *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* are attached as Exhibit E to the Amended Complaint, namely, the publication by defendant Faber and Faber, Inc. and the publication by defendant Dramatists Play Service, Inc. (the Faber and Faber version is also attached to Stephen Adly Guirgis' Declaration as Exhibit 1).

3. Attached as Exhibit 2 (filed under seal with the consent of plaintiff's counsel) is a DVD that includes large portions of a performance of defendants' play. Although defendants' play has been produced throughout the United States and in Canada and the United Kingdom as well, this DVD footage is from the production that was directed and produced by defendants in New York City.

4. Attached as Exhibit 3 is a third-party literary work entitled "Judas Iscariot on Trial," which is a "Satirical Drama in Three Acts" in which Judas is the focus of a judicial proceeding.

5. Attached as Exhibit 4 is an excerpt from an issue of *The Standard Bearer* magazine, which recounts a Colorado church group that staged a play entitled "The Trial of Judas Iscariot" in which Judas stands trial for his alleged betrayal of Jesus Christ. (Note that for all excerpted works attached as exhibits to this Siegartel Declaration, the first page of the work is provided, and the subsequent pages that include the relevant passages. Thus, for example, Exhibit 4 includes pages 1 and 17 [the latter page includes the relevant language]. Pages after page 1 that do not include relevant text are not provided, and only page 1 is provided if the relevant language is included entirely within that first page.)

6. Attached as Exhibit 5 is a collection of excerpted articles and other materials that each discuss various creative works in which historical and/or celebrity figures stand trial fictionally (for example, Josef Mengele and Tony Blair).

7. Attached as Exhibit 6 is a collection of articles and other materials that each discuss various films, television programs, theatrical works, literary works, lithographs, video games, and other creative works that feature Satan wearing formal or semi-formal attire.

8. Attached as Exhibit 7 is a collection of articles, sermons, and other literary works that each include the concept that Judas' soul was easy for Satan to co-opt.

9. Attached as Exhibit 8 is a collection of pages from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* and the *King James Version of the Bible* that each include the idea that (a) Caiaphas believed that Jesus had blasphemed, (b) Caiaphas feared Roman reprisals, and/or (c) Caiaphas did not approach Judas about betraying Jesus. These pages have been marked in the margin to indicate the relevant passage.

10. Attached as Exhibit 9 is a collection of articles and other secondary sources that each include the idea that a disparaging, antagonistic, and brutal relationship prevailed between Pontius Pilate and the Jews. These pages have been marked in the margin to indicate the relevant passage.

11. Attached as Exhibit 10 is a collection of articles and other secondary sources that each include the idea that Pontius Pilate would have no concern for a single Jewish life, and would perceive killing Jesus as simply one less Jew (or would perceive Jesus as simply one more Jew). These pages have been marked in the margin to indicate the relevant passage.

12. Attached as Exhibit 11 are (a) the translations from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* and the *King James Version of the Bible* for chapter 13, verse 27 of the Gospel of John, which each incorporate the idea that Jesus told Judas that whatever he was to do, he should do it quickly; (b) several other scholarly texts that recite this "do it quickly" concept; and (c) an internet search report documenting that a recent search for "Jesus," "Judas," and "do it quickly"

uncovered approximately 340 hits. These pages have been marked in the margin to indicate the relevant passage.

13. Attached as Exhibit 12 is a collection of materials concerning various films, musicals, and other creative works that focused upon Jesus Christ, each of which included either all or five of the following six characters: Jesus, Judas, Saint Peter, Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, and Satan. These works include Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," Martin Scorsese's "The Last Temptation of Christ," and "Jesus Christ Superstar."

14. Attached as Exhibit 13 is a series of four letters that were exchanged between plaintiff's counsel and defendant Stephen Adly Guirgis' counsel before plaintiff filed his Complaint (the first letter from plaintiff's counsel, dated September 25, 2007, was sent to Mr. Guirgis' agent, not Mr. Guirgis' counsel; however, the November 29, 2007 response was sent by Mr. Guirgis' counsel to plaintiff's counsel, and the final two letters, both dated December 21, 2007, were also between counsel). In these letters plaintiff's counsel alleged that Mr. Guirgis' play *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* infringed plaintiff's novel *Judas on Appeal* and that such infringement was willful, and threatened litigation. Plaintiff's counsel also wrote on December 21, 2007 that "the concept of Judas receiving forgiveness by Jesus Christ as set forth in a modern day courtroom scene" is an "idea." Mr. Guirgis' counsel in two separate letters rejected the claim of copyright infringement, explaining that copyright protection only extends to the expression of ideas and not the ideas themselves and that plaintiff's counsel had not demonstrated that Mr. Guirgis had infringed upon plaintiff's protectable expression.

15. Attached as Exhibit 14 is a June 26, 2008 letter from plaintiff's counsel to defendants' counsel in which plaintiff's counsel concedes that it "is clear" that "a modern-day

trial of Judas Iscariot to decide whether or not his soul should be allowed into Heaven” is “an idea, one that is not entitled to protection.”

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on June 27, 2008 in New York, New York.



The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and strokes. Below the signature, the name "ADAM DAVID SIEGARTEL" is printed in a standard, sans-serif font.

ADAM DAVID SIEGARTEL

EXHIBIT 1
Part 1
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----X
MICHAEL G. PORTO (a.k.a. GUY MICHAELS),
Individually,

Plaintiff

AMENDED
VERIFIED COMPLAINT

-against-

STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS and LABYRINTH
THEATER COMPANY, and PHILIP SEYMOUR
HOFFMAN, and FABER AND FABER, INC. and
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.,

Jury Trial Demanded

Defendants

Case No.: 08 CV 01228

X

Plaintiff, MICHAEL G. PORTO (a.k.a. GUY MICHAELS, pseudonym), by his attorneys, The Dorf Law Firm, LLP, complaining of the Defendants, alleges as follows:

PARTIES, JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. Upon information and belief, that at all times hereinafter mentioned, the Plaintiff, MICHAEL G. PORTO (hereinafter "Plaintiff") is an individual residing at 3162 Randall Avenue, Bronx, New York 10465 and is the author of the literary work entitled "Judas On Appeal" and the copyright registrant for the literary work in question.

2. Upon information and belief, that at all times hereinafter mentioned, Defendant STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS is an individual whose principal place of business is in New York and whose residence is in New York City and is a company member of Defendant LABYRINTH Theater Company. His public contact information is listed as c/o John Buzzetti, The Gersh Agency, 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010-2210.

3. Upon information and belief, that at all times hereinafter mentioned, Defendant LABYRINTH THEATER COMPANY is a New York based entity whose principal place of business is 16 West 32nd Street,

Suite 10J, New York, New York 10001. Defendant LABYRINTH is in the business of producing plays and dramatic live performances.

4. Upon information and belief, Defendant PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN is an individual whose principal place of business is 302A W. 12th Street, Suite 214, New York, New York 10014 (where he is a Partner at Cooper's Town Productions), and is a founding company member of the LABYRINTH Theater Company and acted as Director of the initial live performance run of the alleged infringing screenplay at the Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street, New York, New York.

5. Upon information and belief, Defendant FABER AND FABER, INC., an affiliate of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, is a corporation whose principal place of business is 19 Union Square West, New York, New York, 10003. Defendant is in the business of publishing and distributing literary works.

6. Upon information and belief, Defendant DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC. is a New York based corporation whose principal place of business is 440 Park Avenue South, New York, New York, 10016. Defendant is in the business of licensing plays and publishing plays and dramatic works.

7. This court has original and exclusive jurisdiction of this action under 28 U.S.C.A. § 1338(a) because the action arises under the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C.A. §§ 101 et seq.

8. Venue in this Court is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C.A. § 1391(b) because plaintiff's claims arose in this District.

OCCURRENCES

9. In or about February 1999, Plaintiff authored the original literary work "Judas On Appeal" which he self-published in or about February 11, 1999. A copy of the published version of the book is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

10. This book contains a large amount of material wholly original with plaintiff and is copyrightable subject matter under the laws of the United States.

11. Plaintiff is the owner of Copyright Registration Nos. TXu 887-386 (dated February 10, 1999) and TX 6-626-162 (dated February 1, 2008). Certified copies of the registration certificates for each are attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.

12. Since February 1999, Plaintiff has been and still is the sole proprietor of all rights, title and interest in and to the copyright in said book.

13. In or about February 11, 1999, Plaintiff's book "Judas On Appeal" was widely disseminated to the public via a listing on Amazon.com, where it was listed for sale to the public and has been listed there continuously ever since. A copy of a printout from Amazon.com listing Plaintiff's book is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

14. In or about February 1999, an article was published in the New York DAILY NEWS entitled "Betting on a Writing Life" and authored by Bill Bell, a Daily News Staff Writer. This article is written about Plaintiff and the writing of the book "Judas On Appeal". The New York Daily News is a widely disseminated tabloid-style newspaper distributed throughout the New York Tri-State area. A copy of this article is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.

15. In or about March 2, 2005, the play "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" commenced live performances at The Public Theater in New York City in tandem with the LABYRINTH THEATER COMPANY as producer, PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN as Director (and founding member of said Labyrinth Theater Company), and written by STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS (also a member of the Labyrinth Theater Company). See **Exhibit D** attached hereto.

16. Upon information and belief, live performances of "The Last Day of Judas Iscariot" ran at The Public Theater in New York City from approximately March 2, 2005 to April 3, 2005 (with previews beginning on February 8, 2005). Thereafter, live performances of this play were performed in many other cities throughout the country and beyond, including but not limited to the following cities (under different producers): Santa Cruz, Dallas, Austin, Boston, Brookline, MA, Westwood, CA, Santa Rosa, CA, Chicago, Los Angeles, Irvine, Hollywood, CA, Philadelphia, PA, St. Louis, MI, Bakersfield, CA, Lansing, MI, Tucson, AZ and

Toronto, Canada. Performances continue to this day and are planned in the future in cities such as London in the United Kingdom.

17. Upon information and belief, the screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" was published in book form by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE INC. in or about 2006 and was simultaneously listed on Amazon.com and BN.com (Barnes & Noble) for sale. A copy of this published version is attached hereto as Exhibit E. A copy of printouts of the listing of this book for sale on Amazon.com and bn.com is attached hereto as Exhibit F.

18. Upon information and belief, the screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" was published in book form by FABER AND FABER, INC. in or about 2006 and was listed on Amazon.com and bn.com for sale thereafter. A copy of this published version is attached hereto as Exhibit E. A copy of the printout of the listing of this book for sale on Amazon.com and bn.com is attached hereto as Exhibit F.

19. As previously set forth, Plaintiff's original book "Judas On Appeal" was and is widely disseminated on Amazon.com since 1999, by far the most highly trafficked bookseller in the United States, if not the world. Furthermore, Plaintiff's book was widely publicized in a major New York Tri-State area tabloid newspaper, The Daily News, in 1999.

20. The screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" and subsequent live performances and publications in book form of this screenplay, infringed, and continue to infringe, Plaintiff's copyright in the book "Judas On Appeal" in that "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" is substantially and strikingly similar to plaintiff's previously created and published book "Judas on Appeal."

21. Plaintiff's book "Judas on Appeal" is a fictional account of a modern-day trial of Judas Iscariot to decide whether or not his soul should be allowed into Heaven. Defendants' screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" is also a fictional account of a modern-day trial of Judas Iscariot to decide whether or not his soul should be allowed into Heaven.

22. Plaintiff's book "Judas On Appeal" takes place in a modern courtroom setting wherein the witnesses called to testify include, among others, Jesus, Satan/Lucifer, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, Peter (aka

Simon) and incorporates a random combination of mythical and historical figures, ultimately ending with Jesus forgiving Judas. Defendants' screenplay "The Lat Days of Judas Iscariot" also takes place in a modern courtroom setting wherein the witnesses called to testify include Jesus, Satan/Lucifer, Caiaphas Pontius Pilate, Peter (aka Simon) and also incorporates a random combination of mythical and historical figures, and also ultimately ends with Jesus forgiving Judas.

23. In Plaintiff's book "Judas On Appeal," Satan appears dressed in modern human formalwear – a black tuxedo, and testifies that Judas was "easy" in that no effort was required to obtain his soul- that Judas's soul was "handed to him on a silver platter". In Defendants' screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," Satan appears similarly dressed in modern human semi-formalwear – a Gucci suit, and also testifies that he did not have to do anything to obtain Judas's soul – that Judas "...didn't require nudging. Judas was a gimme..."

24. In Plaintiff's book "Judas On Appeal," Caiaphas testifies that Judas had blasphemed, that Caiaphas feared Roman reprisals and that he did not approach Judas about betraying Jesus. In Defendants' screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," Caiaphas similarly testifies that Judas had blasphemed, also testifies that he feared Roman reprisals, and also testifies that he did not approach Judas about betraying Jesus.

25. In Plaintiff's book "Judas On Appeal," Peter/Simon recounts on the witness stand the events at the Last Supper when Jesus told Judas to betray him with Jesus stating "What thou hast to do, do it quickly." In Defendants' screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," Peter/Simon similarly recounts this event on the witness stand, indicating that Jesus said the following to Judas: "do what you gotta do."

26. In Plaintiff's book "Judas On Appeal," Pontius Pilate disparages the Jewish people in his testimony and further refers to the killing of Jesus as merely resulting in "one less Jew." In Defendants' screenplay "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot," Pontius Pilate similarly disparages the Jewish people and similarly is asked if he considered Jesus to be merely "one more Jew."

27. This account of selected similarities between the respective works at issue herein is not meant in any way to be a complete and exhaustive list of the substantial and striking similarities between the respective works.

28. Plaintiff, through his previous attorney, had notified Defendant that Defendant has infringed the copyright of Plaintiff, and Defendant has continued to infringe the copyright. See letter attached as **Exhibit G.**

**AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST DEFENDANT STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS:
COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT**

29. Plaintiff repleads and realleges each and every allegation of all the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint inclusive, as if specifically pleaded herein.

30. Defendant STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS'S acts of writing, publishing, selling and performing "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" infringed Plaintiff's copyright in "Judas On Appeal" in violation of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C.A. § 101 et seq. by knowingly and willfully engaging in these aforementioned acts without the consent or authorization of the Plaintiff.

AS AND FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST DEFENDANTS DRAMATICS PLAY SERVICE, FABER AND FABER, INC. and PHILLIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN: VICARIOUS AND CONTRIBUTORY COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

31. Plaintiff repleads and realleges each and every allegation of all the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint inclusive, as if specifically pleaded herein.

32. Defendants DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE INC. and FABER AND FABER, INC.'s acts of publishing "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" constitute vicarious copyright infringement of Plaintiff's copyrighted literary work "Judas On Appeal" in violation of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C.A. § 101 et seq.

33. Defendant LABYRINTH THEATER COMPANY's act of producing the live performance of "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" constitute vicarious copyright infringement of Plaintiff's copyrighted literary work "Judas On Appeal" in violation of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C.A. § 101 et seq.

34. Defendant PHILLIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN's role as founding member of the LABYRINTH Theater Company and his role as Director of the live performance of "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" at the

Public Theater in New York City constitute vicarious and contributory copyright infringement of Plaintiff's copyrighted literary work "Judas On Appeal" in violation of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C.A. § 101 et seq.

AS AND FOR A THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS: COMMON LAW UNFAIR COMPETITION

35. Plaintiff repleads and realleges each and every allegation of all the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint inclusive, as if specifically pleaded herein.

36. Continuously since 2005, Defendants have been publishing, selling and otherwise marketing the book entitled "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" and have also been performing the play of the same name, and has thus been engaging in unfair trade practices and common law unfair competition against Plaintiff to Plaintiff's irreparable harm.

37. By reason of Defendants' infringement, Plaintiff has sustained and will continue to sustain injury, loss and damage to its ownership rights in the copyrighted work "Judas On Appeal."

38. Further irreparable harm to Plaintiff is imminent on continuing as a result of defendants' conduct, and plaintiff is without an adequate remedy at law.

PRAAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff MICHAEL G. PORTO demands judgment against Defendants as follows:

A. That Defendants, its officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys, and all persons in active concert or participation with any of them, be enjoined from infringing Plaintiff's copyrights pursuant to 17 U.S.C.A. § 502.

B. That Defendants be required to pay Plaintiff such damages and profits as provided in 17 U.S.C.A. § 504 including statutory damages, or actual damages suffered by Plaintiff, or Defendants' profits and advantages attributable to its infringement. Plaintiff is at present unable to ascertain the full extent of the

monetary damage plaintiff has suffered by reason of defendants' acts of copyright infringement, but plaintiff is informed and believes, and on the basis of such information and belief alleges, that plaintiff has sustained such damage in an amount exceeding \$1,000,000.

C. That Defendants be required to pay Plaintiff the costs and disbursements of this action, together with reasonable attorneys fees, as provided by 17 U.S.C.A. § 505.

D. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

THE DORF LAW FIRM, LLP

Attorneys for Plaintiff

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New York, NY 10022-6601

Phone: 212-233-4444

Fax: 212-452-2048

Email: dgelieber@dorfp.com

By: Darren M. Gelieber

Darren M. Gelieber, Esq. (DMG 0665)
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Dated: New York, NY

March 25, 2008

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury.

THE DORF LAW FIRM, LLP
Attorneys for Plaintiff
845 Third Avenue, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10022-6601

By: Darren M. Geliebter
Darren M. Geliebter, Esq. (DMG 0665)
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Dated: New York, NY
March 25, 2008

INDIVIDUAL VERIFICATION

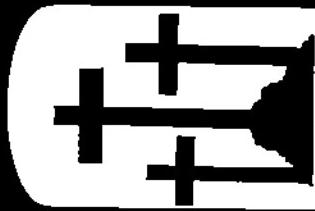
Michael G. Porto, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. That I am Plaintiff in the action herein.
2. I swear under penalties of perjury of the laws of the United States of America that I have read the annexed Amended Complaint and know of the contents thereof and the same are true to my knowledge, except those matters therein which are stated to be alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe them to be true.

Michael G. Porto
Michael G. Porto

Dated: New York, NY
March 25, 2008

EXHIBIT A



"Guy Michaels has written a phenomenal book. He has taken us into a theological labyrinth, which will only be solved on Judgment Day- a philosophical Pandora's box for the new millennium. Recommended reading for all seminary students - Awesome!"

*Dr. Michael Tortex, President
Proseuchomai Ministries International New York, N.Y.*

"Congratulations for your superb work in authoring, "Judas On Appeal?" On a scale of one to ten, I rate the manuscript a "TEN." Persons of any religious persuasion will enjoy reading "Judas On Appeal." Your work will be instrumental in stimulating discussions of the events surrounding the life of the greatest person who ever walked on Planet Earth."

*H. Edward Rowe, B.A., Th.M., D.D.
Las Vegas, Nevada*

"This book is more than "Judas On Appeal," it is about our "Theology on Appeal." It is a blueprint and guide for modern scholars, teachers and lay persons to use when they look at theological and faith possibilities. The wait for Judas to testify is very gripping and real. Mr. Michaels has written a very intriguing work by weaving major theological themes into the plot of the book."

*Nigel O. Cole—Pastor
Bronx Grace Church of The Nazarene
Bronx, N.Y.*

"Gives new insight into the power of God and His Redemption of Mankind. "Judas On Appeal" makes you ponder about God's grace. It will keep you guessing from beginning to end. Recommended reading for all fiction lovers."

*Mitchell Torres—Pastor
Church of The Revelation Bronx, N.Y.*



ISBN 0-9672501-0-2
51495

9 780967 250106

Archangel Publishing
\$14.95

AUTHOR'S LETTER

Judas Iscariot has been granted a hearing on his appeal to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, based on Predestination. The hearing will be held at the present time. All the participants will be resurrected from the dead. Each one will tell the part they played in the most momentous event in history-the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and the Redempion of Mankind. You will be spellbound as you read the testimony of each witness. Then, be shocked as witnesses depict some tales that will have you turning pages to find out-What next?

You will say to yourself that this can't be happening. You have read about the Last Supper, Crucifixion, and the Salvation of Mankind from one perspective-the outside. "Judas On Appear" will give you an inside view. You will feel the emotions of joy, tears, sorrow, and exhilaration, as Michael Sario, anchorman of WCS T.V., reports the hearing and brings it to life. The demonstrations for and against Judas will have you mesmerize. Last but not least, the testimony of the final two witnesses will force you to read on. I believe that you will find the final climax to be most memorable.

Guy Michaels

Judas On Appeal

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GUY MICHAEL S.
"JUDAS ON APPEAL," ALL RIGHTS
RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS MANUSCRIPT
MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ANY MANNER
WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION IN WRITING
FROM COPYRIGHT HOLDER

ISBN: 0-9672501-0-2

Library of Congress Catalog: 99-094580

ARCHANGEL PUBLISHING
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BRONX, NY 10472

Guy Michaels

Author's Note

DESTINY

I was a little boy, age eleven to be exact,
When news came to my door,
Papa had suffered a fatal act-

At first, I did not realize the soulness of this deed,
I surely did not comprehend
The aching of my need.

A boy's spirit can be tortured,
When he is age eleven,
But the Lord has different plans,
As he sits and waits in Heaven-

He turned me into a "Daddy"
Age two-hwo to be exact,
He made me a Father,
What a powerful impact!

The lime is quickly passing,
For proof my hair is grey,
When my time is up,
You can be sure, I'll dare not stray-

There is a reunion waiting,
In a far and distant land,
The Lord has already arranged,
That Papa and I walk hand in hand.

Guy Michaels

How and why "Judas On Appeal" came to be.

A few years back I had a triple bypass procedure. The bleeding in my body did not come to an end during the evening and night. My family feared that I would not survive the ordeal. I had not awoken from the operation, and I was in a stupor. While in this stupor, I kept on seeing a gray image and it repeated over and over again, "You must write about Judas." I woke up the following morning and I was informed of the bleeding, and the fear of my survival.

I did not reveal to anyone about the "Grey Image" and its message, but it was always in the back of my mind. After leaving the hospital to begin my slow recovery, I took to writing. I wrote a fiction novel entitled, "The Sugar Affair." While doing so, the Judas message was fighting to come to the forefront. As soon as I finished the novel, I knew what I had to do. I had to write the Judas story. What about Judas? I began to think and analyze. I remembered a Franciscan Monk from my high school days telling me, if I ever were to write a book, make sure it was controversial. Judas is a very controversial subject. Since I was to write about Judas and controversy, it came down to one conclusion. Judas' soul wishes to be in the Kingdom of Heaven, because he was an active participant in the Redemption, and certainly helped fulfill the

Scriptures. He was the follower who would betray Jesus. Since it was done what he had to do, why should his soul reside in Hell?

I always had a soft spot in my heart for the underdog. It came to me to undergo this challenge by presenting a reasonable and logical explanation, why Judas' soul should be in Heaven. At the same time, I would be able to show the absolute mercy of Almighty God for any and all sinners.

I have received two comments amongst many about "Judas On Appeal." First, from a Roman Catholic Priest, who is also a Vicar of a seminary, "If this book was written in the fifteen century, it would be banned for all eternity, and you would be burned at the stake. I would light the fire." Second, from an editor with a religious background, "I am so uncomfortable with the notion of your thesis that I probably could not work on your presentation without feeling some sense of revulsion at it."

However, please read "Judas On Appeal" with an open mind, and then see if you agree with the above comments, or with my editor's opinion. He writes, "Judas On Appeal" has a rating of "ten," on a scale of one to ten.

CHAPTER

1

"THE END AND THE BEGINNING"

My newscast was about over. There were sixty seconds remaining when I announced, "Folks, today is Holy Thursday. For Christians, these next few days are very important as they prepare for Easter Sunday. Tomorrow night, Good Friday, I will not be doing the newscast. Happy Easter to all, and I'll see you again Monday night. Take care."

Headed toward my office, I was about to pick up my topcoat and leave. Just then my secretary, Irene, approached me.

"Mr. Sarto, your wife called and asked me to relay a message to you. She will be delayed at her office. She'll meet you in St. Patrick's Cathedral in about one hour."

"Did she say why she would be delayed?"
"No, she didn't."

"Fine. Have a Happy Easter. See you on Monday."

"You also have a Happy Easter. See you then."

With topcoat in hand, I began walking to the Cathedral. It was a pleasant night for early April, and the streets were unusually crowded. Since it was almost 7:15, I guessed Rose and I would not get to eat before nine. As I was walking along, I spotted a deli, walked in and ordered tea and a banana. I was tempted to sip the tea while walking,

CHAPTER
II
"NEWSFLASH"

but had second thoughts. The back of the deli had an area with a counter and stools. I decided to sit there, drink the tea, eat the banana and leave. Ten minutes went by, and now I had taken the bite off my hunger twinges.

When I arrived at the Cathedral, people were swarming all over. Once inside, I aimed straight for my usual spot in the right corner. It seemed strange, but I find a seat there almost every time. After kneeling and blessing myself, I began to pray and do some meditating. Rose knows where I am in St. Patrick's, so she won't have any trouble finding me. After I had said a few *Our Fathers* and *Hail Mary's*, I raised myself from my knees and sat down to meditate about the time, over nineteen hundred years ago, that Jesus was having the Last Supper with the Apostles.

My secretary, Irene, called urgently. "Mr. Worthington would like to see you in his office as soon as possible. It is quite important."

"Tell him I'll be there in two minutes."

Not knowing what happened, I feared something had really exploded somewhere. After putting on my jacket, I made a beeline to Worthington's office. His secretary waved me to go right in.

"Michael, come on in...and you better sit down. Do you want a drink or something? What I am about to tell you will buckle your knees."

I could not for the life of me anticipate what he was about to tell me.

"Was the President shot?"

"No, no, Michael, that's too easy. Hold on. I must get a shot of scotch. You sure you don't want one?"

"I'm positive. Did some crazy country start a war?"

"Michael, stop guessing. You will not believe this newsflash. I received it on my private wire. Are you ready?"

He was downing the shot of scotch and bango, what he said hit me right between the eyes.

"You will not believe this newsflash stated and I quote: 'Judas Iscariot has been granted a

hearing on his appeal to enter Heaven. The federal government has granted to the *World Court of Religion* the use of the federal courthouse at Foley Square, here in New York. The hearing will begin at nine, Monday morning.' Further details will be arriving shortly."

"Wait a minute. You must be joking! This can't be happening!"

"Michael, I swear it to you. It is the gospel truth."

"I'd better have the drink that you offered earlier. I'll take some brandy."

"Should I make it a double?"

"No, one will be just fine."

He went to the bar and poured the brandy. He also poured more scotch for himself.

"Here, Michael. I still can't believe it. This damn thing happened over nineteen hundred years ago. Now a hearing is granted for his appeal?"

"Who granted the hearing for the appeal?"

"How am I to know? I guess it had to be God Himself. I know I couldn't grant it."

After drinking the brandy, I still did not believe what I had just heard.

"Michael, let's get this straight. You will handle the entire situation for the WCS. You are the one I trust completely, and I do not want any screw-ups. You have a carte-blanche checkbook at your disposal. Permission has been granted for TV cameras to be in the hearing room. A panel of lawyers will probably be needed to analyze the proceedings. Everything will be in your hands."

You call all the shots. I will have my secretary give you all the details as soon as she or I receive them. I promise you a paid vacation for you and your wife when the hearing is completed. I'd better get myself another scotch."

"You better take it easy with the scotch. You know your high blood pressure and scotch are not the best buddies."

"What am I supposed to do? I'm the CEO and when I get this type of newsflash I go a little bananas."

"A little bananas is better than going into a box, six feet under!"

"You're right, Michael. Just sit tight in your office and I'll get you the news as I receive it."

"Take care, Mr. Worthington. I'll be waiting."

Back at my office, Irene followed me to my desk.

"Mr. Sarto, what was so important?"

"If I told you, you would not believe it! I did not believe it either, but it is true. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus Christ, was granted a hearing on his appeal to enter Heaven."

She burst out laughing.

"Mr. Sarto, is this an April Fool's joke?"

"No, it is not. I told you I did not believe it. The World Court of Religion will conduct the hearing in federal court in New York City. The federal government gave the World Court of Religion permission to use the courthouse at Foley Square. Mr. Worthington wants me to cover all of

the proceedings. In addition, he wants me to supervise the entire situation. I am sure I can rely on you for all the help I will need. Mr. Worthington will be feeding information to me as he receives it. Make sure I get it immediately. This is sure to be a very whacked-out situation, and that is putting it mildly!"

"Mr. Sarto, I see you are dead serious. If I didn't know you better, I would swear you are pulling my leg."

"No, I'm not. You'd better glue yourself to your desk. We should be receiving news any moment now. Please get my wife on the phone. I better tell her this also."

"Yes, sir."

After a few moments, "Mrs. Sarto is on the phone."

"Rose, sit down in your seat."

"Michael, did something happen? Are you all right?"

"Yes, I'm all right, but something did happen. You will not believe it."

"Go ahead, tell me. I'm sitting."

"Rose, Judas Iscariot has been granted a hearing on his appeal to enter Heaven. Mr. Worthington received the newsflash on his private wire a little while back."

"Michael, have you been drinking with that alcoholic?"

"No, Rose. I haven't been drinking. Hold on. Yes, I had one shot of brandy when he told me

about the newsflash. I did not get drunk, but I was tempted to get drunk with him."

"Michael, listen, I do not have time to play games in the middle of the afternoon. I am trying to come up with a defense plan for my client. I don't believe what you are telling me is true and I warn you. Don't come home drunk after your newscast."

"You know I don't get drunk and what I'm telling you is true."

She clicked off. I just stared off into space, muttering to myself, positive that God put women on earth to torture men.

**CHAPTER
III
“ADDITIONAL NEWS INFORMATION”**

Within the hour, Irene came rushing into my office. “Mr. Sarto, I just received additional information from Mr. Worthington’s secretary. I was asked to relay it to you immediately. As you know, the hearing will commence at nine, Monday morning. It will be held in the federal courthouse at Foley Square. A large room is being specially constructed to handle the proportions of this hearing. There will be a panel of six judges to hear the appeal. The judges are Solomon, Chief Judge. Then the other judges are Buddha, Mohammed, Karl Marx, Machiavelli, and Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader.

“Here is a quick background of each judge: “Solomon—considered a ‘sage’ in the annals of history.

“Buddha—founder of Buddhism.

“Mohammed—founder of the Moslem Religion.

“Karl Marx—Atheist and advocate of Communism.

“Machiavelli—Noted for unscrupulous view of life, ‘The end justifies the means.’

“Joseph Smith—Leader of the Mormon Religion.

“All who appear in the courtroom will be dressed in the clothing of their day. All who see and hear any of the proceedings will be blessed with

and hear any of the proceedings will be blessed with the ‘Gift of Tongues.’ Therefore, anyone who will be speaking, will speak in his native tongue and all will understand what is being said.”

“Is that all?”

“Yes, that is all for now, but more is expected shortly.”

“Well, keep yourself glued to your desk. Bring me further news as soon as you receive it.”

“I will, Mr. Sarto. This is probably the strangest news item I have ever heard.”

“Don’t feel bad. With all the years that I have been in the news business, I’ve never encountered a news item like this. We just have to see what develops. Bring me anything new as soon as you receive it. We probably have to spend the entire weekend here, in order to prepare for the opening on Monday.”

“Maybe you should call Mrs. Sarto to alert her.”

“A good idea, but I’ll do it later, when I’m more positive what has be done.”

“Yes, I’ll be back as soon as I know something new.”

After looking over the names of the judges, I surmised Judas Iscariot would be given an extremely fair hearing. The judges came from all areas. One could easily see that prejudice would not enter the case, and subsequently the decision. It would be very interesting to hear the questions that the judges would throw into the proceedings. What kind of response would they seek? Also, what

position would the individual be put in, who has been asked the question?

My phone rang. "Mrs. Sarto is on the line." "Put her through, please."

"Michael, I just had to call you. After I hung up, I couldn't help thinking about what you said. Either you went completely nuts, or you got yourself drunk with the alcoholic!"

"Rose, first of all, I did not get drunk. It was one shot of brandy. Secondly, I did not go crazy. What I told you is completely true. Judas Iscariot has been granted a hearing on his appeal for his soul to be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

"What is the basis of his appeal?"

"His claim is he was *PREDESTINED*. He was born to do a certain act and he did it."

"When is this all going to take place? I don't know whether I should burst out laughing or sit down and cry."

"You can do whatever you feel like doing. My hands are full over here. Worthington just flipped everything over to me. He walked out and got himself drunk. He could not believe this whole scenario was possible. My secretary just brought me confirmation. The hearing will begin Monday morning. She also brought me a list of the panel of judges. There will be six judges and the names alone will floor you."

"How in the world will this come about? How will anyone understand what is said and going on?"

"Rose, baby, the six judges will be

resurrected. Yes, that is right. They will be brought back from the dead. Not only that, they will all be dressed in the garb of their day. Everyone will be blessed with the *Gift of Tongues*. Everyone speaks and everyone understands."

"Michael, hold on a moment, I really must get myself a drink. Don't hang up."

I waited until she came back on.

"Michael, are you there?"

"Where the hell do you expect me to be? It looks like I'm going to be stuck here the whole weekend."

"You mean, you are not coming home?"

"I don't know for sure what is happening. You might have to bring me all my changes of clothes. We probably will have to eat here as well. We will order all the food, and you and I will just have to stay here and eat."

"Michael, I still don't know if you are kidding me, but I'm starting to believe you. I warn you though, if you are pulling some sort of joke on me, you will pay."

"Rose, right now I do not have any head to listen to your threats. I'm telling you the truth. If you believe me, that is fine. If you don't, that is your problem. I'll talk to you later. My secretary is coming back with more news. Take care."

As I hung up, I saw Irene was very flustered as she walked into my office.

"Mr. Sarto, I just received the names of the advocates. John Calvin was named as the advocate

for Judas Iscariot. Dante was named as the advocate for Christianity."

"You easily see the ballgame will be played right to the hilt. The *crème de la crème* will be in the courtroom to do what they are best known for."

"Mr. Sarto, please forgive me. I am not able to take this kind of pressure. Will you please excuse me and allow me to go home? I have developed a migraine. It is literally ripping my head apart. If it is fine with you, I will have Mr. Worthington's office forward all the information directly to you, since I know you cannot leave here these next few days. If I feel better, I will come back in the morning to help you."

"Don't worry about it. I'll be fine. Go on home. Just tell Worthington's office to feed me the new information as soon as it is received. I already told my wife we will probably have to remain here. She'll be here to give me some help. Take care of yourself."

"Mr. Sarto, thank you. I knew you would understand. If you need anything, call me at home."

"Take care. Just get well soon."

She left and I went to boil some water to make tea. Thank God I was not going on the air these next few days. The water began to boil and I poured it into my mug, watching the steam as it rose. I still couldn't believe this was really happening. Life was surely very strange sometimes.

CHAPTER IV "POTENTIAL WITNESSES"

While sipping the tea, my phone rang.
"Yes," I answered.

"Mr. Sarto, this is Mr. Worthington's secretary. I have more information for you. Are you ready?"

"Yes, I am. What do you have?"

"I have the list of potential witnesses. It is quite long. Make sure you have enough paper."

"Don't worry, I have."

"Good, let's go. The names are not necessarily in the order of their appearance.

"Peter—Disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Thomas—Disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Dismas—The good thief.

"Annas—High Priest of the Jews.

"Caiaphas—High Priest of the Jews. Also he was the son-in-law of Annas.

"Pontius Pilate—Roman Governor.

"A. Herod—King of Jews.

"Two accusers of Peter—Portress—Attendant.

"Roman Centurion—in charge of execution of Jesus Christ.

"Judas Iscariot.

"John—Disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Matthew—Disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Mark—Disciple of Jesus Christ..

"There is one definite and perhaps a few more witnesses who have not been named. Did you get all the names, Mr. Santo?"

"Yes, I did. Is there anything else?"
"Just one more item. A panel is to be named to act as analysts of the proceedings. I believe this panel will help enlighten the viewers as to what is going on. The newspeople will probably be allowed to question these analysts."

"Any news about how many will be on this particular panel?"

"No, not now. I think this will be the next item. Anyway, either myself or my assistant will forward to you any news as soon as we receive it."

"Thank you very much. By the way, have you heard from Mr. Worthington?"

"Just one phone call a little while back. It was difficult to really understand what he was saying. There was some very loud background music where he was calling. He was slurring his words most of the time. I guess you get the picture?"

"Yes, I do. Again, thank you very much."

After hanging up the phone, I began to look over the list of witnesses. It appeared both advocates would fight tooth and nail to win this decision. They would have to put up a super

endeavor to be able to convince this panel of judges. I wondered who selected the judges for this panel. It seemed to be fairly balanced for both sides. I would just have to wait and see. One thing though, I would not like to be sitting on the panel of judges.

It is tough enough making decisions in a daily life. Imagine having to make a decision that will put an individual's soul in either Heaven or Hell for all eternity! No way would I want to make the decision, yes or no.

Even being called as a witness would be some sort of tribulation. There was no way the witness would be able to lie about anything. The Scriptures would play an integral part in the proceedings. The advocate who could scheme and cajole would have some sort of edges. Dante, the advocate for Christianity, having the reputation that he has, would probably come out firing his best shots. With him there was no room for error. He would drive on relentlessly to win his point. Truthfully, I couldn't wait to see him in action.

On the other side, John Calvin, the advocate for Judas, would keep on hammering away on the point of *predestination*. He lived and died with the theory. That was the reason why he was chosen to represent Judas at this hearing. A battle of giants certainly loomed on the horizon.

My phone rang again. "Yes."

"Mr. Sarto, this is Mr. Worthington's secretary. We just received additional news on the wire for you. Are you ready?"

"Yes, I am."

"The new information concerns the panel of analysts. There will be three individuals on the panel. Their names and a little background is what I will give you.

"The first is Aristotle—the Greek Philosopher.

"The second one is Thomas More—English Lawyer and Saint of the Catholic Church.
"The third one is Martin Luther—leader of the Protestant Reformation.

"Did you get everything?"

"Yes, I did. Is there anything else?"

"No. That is all for now. If any more news items come in, we will get it to you. Talk to you soon."

"Thank you very much. Take care."

As I looked over this list of the analyst panel, I was truly amazed. Everything was being set up so that Judas would definitely receive a fair hearing. Thomas More would give the Christian point of view. Martin Luther would give the Protestant point of view, which included *predestination*. The third member, Aristotle, would be in the middle. His practice of logical conclusions would be handy to balance the emotions of the other two members of the panel.

It appeared everything had been put into place. The judges had been named. The advocates for both sides had been named. The panel of analysts had been named. The witnesses had been named. There seemed to be one hitch in the list of witnesses. She said "one" witness was definite but was not named. Also there might be more. I'd check it out to make sure. I rang up Mr. Worthington's office. A lady answered and I presumed it was his secretary. "This is Michael

Sarto. I would like to ask you one question, if you don't mind?"

"Of course, Mr. Sarto. How may I help you?"

"When you gave me the list of witnesses, did you say there was 'one' definite witness who was not named?"

"Yes, I did. The information I gave you was exactly what I received."

"It seems strange that a certain witness was not given a name."

"Maybe the witness might not be called to testify."

"Possible. On the other hand, the witness could be one of immense importance. It might completely swing the decision either way."

"Mr. Sarto, you might be right. I don't want to think about it."

"I'm amazed at what I am saying and hearing right now. Maybe I should have gone out with Mr. Worthington and joined him on his drinking binge. Truthfully, it would not have been a bad decision after all. Anyway, thank you for your help. Take care."

"You too, Mr. Sarto. If anything else comes in, I'll let you know."

My curiosity started to get the best of me. Who could this "no name" witness be? He definitely was one of the characters in this scenario. Apparently, both of the advocates knew who he was. That was why it was released. There was one definite witness, but perhaps there were more whose

names were not released. The mystery witness could be one of two. Either it could be Jesus Christ Himself or Lucifer. I thought it would be extremely tough to call on Jesus Christ to be a witness. However, the way things were happening, anything was possible. I could see Lucifer being called. I was sure Lucifer could be blamed for tempting Judas to betray Jesus Christ. It would be the same *modus operandi* he used when Eve tempted Adam.

My phone rang. "Yes."

"Michael, this is Rose."

"Yes, G.T. What is it?"

"Michael, this is not G.T. This is your wife, Rose."

"I know."

"Then, why are you calling me G.T.?"

"Are you a woman?"

"Of course I am. You know I am."

"Then you are a G.T."

"Pray tell. Since I am a woman, why am I a G.T.?"

"You are one hundred percent correct. Since you are a woman, you belong to a select group which is named 'women.' Women is a species organization that has been placed on earth by God Himself. The species has a particular purpose."

"And what is this particular purpose?" Her tone jumped ten decibels.

"The particular purpose of this organization is strictly to torture men. Thus, each individual of the species is a 'G.T.' Namely God's Torturers.

The next instant I heard the phone slam in my ear.

I shook my head, and giant smile came to my face.

CHAPTER
V
“HEARING DAY NUMBER ONE”

The hearing was scheduled to begin on Monday at nine. I did not have the best quality of sleep the night before. I literally twisted and turned all night long. Rose was constantly assuring me all would turn out well.

She made sure to tell me, “Keep your cool and go with the flow. Report what you see and hear. Don’t comment for or against. By doing that, you cannot be charged with being prejudiced.”

As I was looking at her, I could see it was the lawyer’s mouth talking. At the moment I was her client, and she was advising what was the best for me to do. The clock showed it was six-thirty. The limo was set to pick me up at seven. I wanted to be at the courthouse by seven-thirty, to check everything out. The WCS construction crew was to build a glass-enclosed, soundproof booth in the back of the courtroom. It was to be elevated and there would be enough room for me and a cameraman. The other major networks were given the same privilege. The lesser-ranked TV stations would obtain their feed from the major networks. Since the booths were glass-enclosed and soundproof, the television personalities would not be disturbing the proceedings.

Rose kept on pestering me to eat some breakfast before I left.

“OK. Make some oatmeal and a cup of tea. It should keep me going for a while.”

“How about some juice?”
“Some grapefruit juice would be fine.”

I went to put on the finishing touches, and checked in the mirror to see how the tie looked with the navy suit jacket. It was too loud for an early morning telecast, so I chose one a little more subdued, then came out to have breakfast.

“How do I look, G.T.?”
“Michael, you know you are going to pay for that. Don’t you?”

“G.T., we men always wind up paying, one way or another.”

“Just sit down and eat, before you find the oatmeal on your head!”

“Spoken like a true G.T.” I said with a smile.

After eating all of the oatmeal, I checked myself for the last time. The intercom buzzed.

“Mr. Sarto, your limo is here.”
“Pete, I’ll be right down. Rose, even though you are a G.T., I still love you.”

“I love you too, even though you are a chauvinist. Do a great show. I’ll be right here watching you.”

We kissed and I went down to the limo. Pete, the doorman, opened the back door of the limo for me.

“Mr. Sarto, you are the best. I know you will do a great job.”

"Thanks for the support. I'll need all of it.
See you."

The driver headed to the courthouse at Foley Square. He kept glancing at the rearview mirror to see what I was doing. He was dying to ask me a question.

"Louis, what is on your mind this morning?"
"Nothing, Mr. Sarto, really nothing."

"Come on, Louis. I know and you know that you want to ask some sort of question."

"Well, Mr. Sarto, since you put it that way, I really would like to ask your opinion about something."

"Louis, get it over with. What do you want to ask?"

"Mr. Sarto, do you think Judas deserves this hearing?"

Rose's words came to me in a flash: "Don't comment either way."

"Louis, to tell you the truth, at this point I can't say yes or no. There are points in his favor and there are points against him. That is why he was granted the hearing. Everything would be put on the table. After all is presented, the judges would vote. The way I see things, if one hundred people are asked to vote on this issue, you could get an even split."

Lucky for me the limo pulled up to the courthouse. Policemen were all over the place. Barricades were set up. The general public could not get too close to the courthouse steps. How was the limo able to pull up close to the courthouse?

"Then I remembered that the license plate was WCS-TV, so we had police clearance.

As I got out of the limo, a policeman came up to me. "Mr. Sarto, please follow me. I will escort you to the entrance of the courthouse. Once inside the courthouse, a federal marshal has been assigned to be your shadow. He will be with you while you are in the courthouse. When you come back out, I will be waiting for you. Here is your ID tag. My name is Ryan. I have been assigned to be with you during the entire proceedings. This is a precautionary measure. It is not known if some crackpot would like to take a shot at you. He are she might not agree with your point of view. Your cameraman is already in the booth. I gave him his ID tag. Your station's truck is parked on the side, with the other trucks. All the people from your station are in the truck. You will communicate with them by phone from your booth."

"Will this be the same for all the TV people?"

"I believe so. The feds, mayor, and commissioner are not taking any chances. They all feel this could turn out to be a very explosive situation. I'm sure you agree with their conclusions."

"Yes, I do, Ryan. To be honest with you, what you just said about being explosive is the best description I've heard this morning."

"Mr. Sarto, are you ready to enter the courthouse?"

"Yes, I am, Ryan. Let's go."

When we arrived at the top of the steps, we entered and there was a federal marshal, directly in front of us.

Ryan spoke, "This is Mr. Sarto of WCS."

"I know. Federal Marshal Boswell has been assigned to be with Mr. Sarto while he is in the courthouse."

He turned to his left. Then he announced, "Mr. Boswell, here is your man, Mr. Sarto. Mr. Sarto, this gentleman is Federal Marshall Boswell. He will be by your side the entire time while you are here."

I extended my hand to Boswell and he did the same. We shook hands and he spoke, "Mr. Sarto, it is my pleasure being here with you during this hearing."

"Mr. Boswell, I just know I will be safe being in your hands."

He gave me a smile, showing a dazzling set of white teeth.

"Mr. Sarto, are you ready?"

"I sure am, Mr. Boswell."

"Good, then let's go. By the way, Mr. Sarto, skip the Mr. Boswell, just call me Bos. Everyone else does."

"Fine with me, Bos." We both smiled.

"Hold on, Bos." I turned to where Ryan was. "Ryan, I guess I'll see you when this day is done."

"Mr. Sarto, I'll be right here when you come back out. Have a good day."

"Ryan, I hope to have a great day. See you later."

I began walking behind Boswell as we headed to the elevator bank. I saw in front of me a giant of an individual. He was about six feet four. His shoulders and back made two of mine put together. Later on I found out he was a defensive star football player at Rambling College. His coach was all set to get him an NFL contract, but the Lord had different plans. Boswell tore his knee apart in his senior year. It was the end of his football days. He applied for the position in the federal marshal program. He had been with them ever since.

He pushed the button and the elevator door opened. A federal marshal was inside. Boswell spoke, "This is Mr. Sarto. He is going to the hearing room."

The marshal just nodded and smiled. The elevator stopped on the seventeenth floor. The doors opened.

"This way, Mr. Sarto."

We walked a few steps and there were two marshals standing guard outside of the courtroom, 1705.

"Gentlemen, this is Mr. Sarto of WCS. He will be in the corner glass booth." "OK, Bos, escort him to the booth. Sit outside the booth. You are to be with him every moment that he is here."

"Thank you. I know."

He turned to me, "Mr. Sarto, just follow me."

We entered the courtroom. I said to myself that the construction crew had to be working the entire weekend in order to set up this courtroom. The bench for the judges had been expanded to accommodate six judges. There would normally be only three judges sitting in an appeal hearing. I noticed the microphones were in place on the judges' bench, the witness box, and by the table where the advocates would be sitting.

"Mr. Sarto, you will be up there."

"Yes, I see. Richard, my cameraman, is already up there. We have done quite a few shows together. I guess your seat is right by the booth."

"Yes, it is. I will be there all the time while you are in the booth. If anyone tries to get to you, they must get by me first."

"Bos, from where I'm standing, I can't see it happening."

"Mr. Sarto, you can bet every dime in your pocket. No sucker is going to get by me, and then get you."

"Bos, I just can't find any bookmaker who will take the bet." We both laughed.

"Bos, I better get up there and prepare what I got to do."

"Yes, sir. Up this staircase." He led the way and opened the door. I walked in and Richard greeted me.

"Mr. Sarto, this is the weirdest assignment that I have ever been on."

"Richard, you are speaking for both of us. You can be sure this will be in my memoirs. I see

Jennings of ABC, Rather of CBS, and Brokow of NBC are already here."

"Yes, they arrived a few minutes before you."

The courtroom began to fill up. I noticed a great number of them were dignitaries from the United Nations, and the celebrities from the entertainment world.

"Hold on, the Vice President and the Chief Justice are walking in together. They are taking seats behind Advocate Dante's table. Does that mean anything? Richard, what time do we start?"

"We will be on at eight-thirty. It is half an hour before the hearing will begin."

"Too bad. It would be great to show who has been walking into the courtroom. It doesn't really matter. We can show shots of them during the telecast. Is everything set in the truck?"

"It sure is. Just put on your mike and earphones. They are waiting for you to check in. They want to be sure everything is in tip-top shape."

I slipped on the mike and put the earphones in place.

"Testing, one, two, three."

"You are coming in loud and clear. Five minute to post time."

The courtroom was now packed. I guess you have to call this hearing an "Event." Everyone wanted to be here. It was something they would love to tell their grandchildren, "I was there at the hearing of Judas Iscariot."

"Mr. Sarto, two minutes to go."

**CHAPTER
VI
“ON THE AIR”**

“You’re on, Mr. Sarto, post time on the dot.”

I began to speak: “Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. Those of you who are tuned into this telecast, I welcome you. It does not make a bit of difference whether you are in New York, the United States, or anywhere else in this wide world of ours. I am Michael Sarto, news anchor of WCS News. I am talking to you live from the federal courthouse at Foley Square in New York City. I am in the hearing room, seventeen-oh-five, of the court of appeals. As you can well imagine, and as you can see, the room is packed.

“It definitely is a most momentous occasion. One that has never been recorded in history books. Yes, a soul that is in Hell has been granted a hearing on his appeal. He believes his soul should be in Heaven and not in Hell. On a technicality, the World Court of Religion has granted this soul the hearing. The hearing is scheduled to begin within a very short while. As you probably know by now, the soul belongs to Judas Iscariot. The incidents which led to his demise and subsequent sentence in Hell occurred over nineteen hundred years ago. Please stay put a moment. The court deputy is about to make an announcement.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, entering the courtroom is the analyst panel. Aristotle, Martin Luther, and Sir Thomas More comprise the panel.”

The panel was walking into the room.

“They have taken their seats at a table, set off to the right. Aristotle was first, followed by Martin Luther and Thomas More. To tell you the truth, the three of them do not look bad at all. I would say they look as though each of them is in the prime of his life. All the spectators have risen to get a better view. The three of them have been dead for centuries. As you can hear, there is a low buzz going on. I’m sure most of the spectators do not believe what they are seeing. I imagine you folks at your television sets do not believe what you are seeing either. The hearing will commence at nine sharp. Judas Iscariot and his advocate, John Calvin, should be entering the room momentarily.”

While I was speaking, Richard was scanning the courtroom with his camera. He seemed to stay a few extra moments when he had the analyst panel in view. None of the three was showing any signs of emotion. They were dressed in the garb of their days on earth. None of the three was speaking.

The court deputy announced, “Ladies and gentlemen, the Advocate for Christianity, Dante, is entering the room.”

In strode Dante. Richard had the camera right on him.

“There he is, folks. The advocate for Christianity, Dante. He appears to be quite determined and confident. He was especially

**CHAPTER
VII
“HISTORY IS BEING WRITTEN”**

chosen to do this difficult chore. I'm sure the one who chose Dante had full confidence in his selection. Dante is taking his seat at the table, which is positioned on the right side facing the judges' bench. The spectators are really buzzing now. They were all standing when Dante appeared. It seems the next 'pièce de resistance' will be on the scene shortly."

The court deputy announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, please refrain from any demonstration. Also, please remain as quiet as possible. Entering the courtroom is Advocate John Calvin. With him is his client, Judas Iscariot."

"Here they are, Judas Iscariot and his advocate John Calvin. No one in the courtroom is sitting. It seems the eyes of everyone are set on this couple. They also are dressed in the best clothes. No emotions from either one. John Calvin is leading Judas. They head to the table on the left side. Neither one of the two took any recognition of Dante. He is looking straight ahead. Is he concentrating on what he has to do? One thing is certain. Dante is not giving his adversary any sign of being uneasy."

Richard was focused on Judas and Calvin, who were now sitting.

"Friends, as you can see, Judas is not showing any emotions at this point. John Calvin probably instructed him to act in this manner."

The producer spoke into my earphone, "One minute to post time. Nine AM is sixty seconds away and counting."

"For you who are watching the TV sets, please be prepared. History will be written in less than fifty seconds. The court deputy will make an announcement at nine sharp."

The county deputy strode to the microphone. "Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The World Court of Religion is now in session. The honorable judges will take their places on the bench. Please, no demonstration, nor any speaking. Solomon, the Chief Judge, will enter first. Second will be Buddha. Third will be Mohammed. Fourth will be Karl Marx. Fifth will be Niccolo Machiavelli. Sixth will be Joseph Smith."

As the court deputy was making the announcement, the judges began filing into the courtroom. All were dressed in their best garb. Solomon led the parade. As each name was announced by the court deputy, the individual appeared. He went straight to his designated seat on the bench. The courtroom spectators looked to be in a complete daze. Richard had the camera first on the judge. Then he would switch to a portion of the spectators. Back and forth he would show the room of characters. The main characters: judges, advocates, Judas and the spectators. I had goose bumps while I was sitting in a room where history

was being written. All the judges arrived at their positions and took their seats.

When all the judges were seated, Solomon spoke:

"Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. As the court deputy said earlier, the World Court of Religion is now in session. The purpose of this hearing is to hear the appeal of Judas Iscariot. His claim is that his soul belongs in Heaven. After many years of debate it has been decided the appeal has some merit. The World Court of Religion has been designated to hear any pertinent facts. All witnesses will have a say, either for or against Judas Iscariot. When all the testimony is presented, the judges will take a secret vote. A majority vote is necessary for a decision. After the decision is made public, all parties have agreed the decision is final and binding. Everyone speaking will be understood by one and all. Each individual listening will be endowed with the "gift of tongues."

Every spectator continued to look as though transfixed. I was amazed at the fact of each spectator being in a stupor of some sort.

Solomon continued, "Are all the judges ready?" He looked at all of them, one at a time. Each one nodded his approval. No emotions were on display. After the countdown, Solomon turned to Dante.

"Advocate Dante, are you prepared and ready?"

"Yes, Judge Solomon, I am ready."

"Good. Advocate Calvin, are you prepared and ready?"

"Yes, Judge Solomon, I am ready."

"Since all of the judges are ready, and the advocates are both ready, let us begin the proceedings. I want to inform both advocates, the court wishes your opening statements to be brief."

Dante jumped up. "I object, Your Honor. I have quite a bit to say. I would like the panel of judges to understand the position of Christianity."

"Advocate Dante, first of all, your objection is overruled. Secondly, you will have enough opportunity to present your position during these proceedings. Thirdly, I would not want to turn these proceedings into any form of games. Is that understood?"

Judge Solomon drove across his position of authority. He set Dante straight right from the beginning.

Dante answered, "Yes, Judge Solomon. It is understood."

"Fine, then proceed. Again, please make your opening statements as brief as possible."

Dante walked up to the judges' bench and you could sense he was boiling underneath his calm exterior. He began to address the judges.

"Honorable Judges. We are gathered here today for an extremely important occasion. In a matter of time, a decision will be made. This decision will have an enormous effect on the ideals and the manner in which all human beings will conduct their lives while they are on this Planet

Earth. As almost all religions agree, the human species has been granted an intellect, which makes the human species superior to the animal species. Since the human species was granted the intellect, he was given the special gift of free will. Therefore, the human species is expected to exercise his free will in a manner which is necessary for him, or rather his soul, to enter the Kingdom of Heaven upon his death.

"If the human species makes decisions and his actions are results of these decisions, it is expected that the soul of this human species be rewarded or should be punished. The soul should be rewarded if the human species led an outstanding life according to the rules of the Ten Commandments. The soul should be punished if the rules of the Ten Commandments were violated. In addition, there are certain rules of moral behavior which every human possesses instinctively. When these instinctive rules are violated, the human species knows he has committed a violation, and his soul shall suffer consequences. In the course of this hearing, I shall prove to the Honorable Judges of the World Court of Religion, the soul of Judas Iscariot belongs in one place, and one place alone—Hell, to suffer eternal damnation."

The spectators began buzzing as Dante walked back to his seat. The analysts made notes and began to whisper to each other. Judge Solomon addressed Advocate Calvin. "Advocate Calvin. Will you please present your opening statements." "Yes, I will."

Advocate Calvin approached the judges' bench. The spectators quieted down. They wanted to hear how he would try to bend Dante's remarks to favor Judas Iscariot.

Advocate Calvin began speaking, "Honorable Judges of the World Court of Religion, I agree with the point that Advocate Dante made. A decision will have a tremendous effect on how the human species conduct their lives while on Planet Earth. Yes, a soul should be rewarded if the human species led an outstanding life according all moral rules. Yes, a soul should be punished if the human species violated these moral rules. However, if a human being was placed on Planet Earth for a specific purpose, and the human being was not able to exercise the free will which was given to all human beings, why should the soul of the particular human being be punished? While on Planet Earth, the human being was doing what he was programmed to do. If he did what he was placed on Planet Earth to do, should the soul of the individual not be rewarded? Why should he be punished? I will show to the honorable judges of the World Court of Religion that my client, Judas Iscariot, was placed on Planet Earth to do a specific act. He did do what was expected of him. He fulfilled the prophecies of the Scriptures. Was he rewarded? No. His soul was not. Was he punished? Yes. His soul was punished. Contrary to what Advocate Dante has stated, Judas Iscariot's soul does not belong in Hell to suffer eternal damnation. No, Judas Iscariot's soul belongs in Heaven, where the

soul can enjoy the blessings which go for doing what the human species is expected to do while living on Planet Earth."

The courtroom went into complete silence as Advocate Calvin walked back to his seat. Judas seemed to look pleased. His advocate scored a decent rebuttal. I was now looking at the analysts. They were whispering to each other. Hopefully we could hook up with them soon to have their comments on the opening statements from the advocates.

Judge Solomon started to speak, "The World Court of Religion will take a short recess. When we return, Advocate Dante will begin with his witness." The court deputy announced, "All rise, one hour recess." All the judges filed out. The spectators were now talking. They just couldn't seem to believe what they just heard. I would try to get the analyst panel on camera to hear their remarks about the opening statements of both advocates.

"Analyst panel, please come in." The three of them had their earphones in place. "This is Michael Sarto, anchorman of WCS TV. If I may, I would like to ask the members of the analyst panel a few questions."

"Mr. Sarto, this is Aristotle. You may ask your questions."

I informed Richard to keep the analyst panel on camera. He did. I began my questions.

"Gentlemen, do you feel Solomon was justified in chastising Advocate Dante?"

Aristotle answered. "In a way, yes. By doing what he did, he made sure everyone will understand the seriousness of this hearing."

"Sir Thomas More, was Advocate Dante's presentation of the opening statement effective?"

"Mr. Sarto, at this point, the presentation was effective to a certain extent. Advocate Dante's belief is that there is no bending where Christianity is concerned. If one lives an outstanding life on Planet Earth, the soul is rewarded. If not, the soul is punished."

"Martin Luther, what is your opinion of Advocate Calvin's opening statement? Do you find it strange that Advocate Calvin never used the word *predestined* in his statement?"

"Mr. Sarto, I believe Advocate Calvin made an excellent presentation. He did not seem to wish to push his points too hard. Although he did not use the word *predestined*, he made sure all understood the position Judas Iscariot has taken. Advocate Calvin explained *predestination*. He made his point."

"I thank the members of the analyst panel. I am sure we will be speaking again as this hearing progresses."

**CHAPTER
VIII
“OPENING WITNESS”**

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are on live again. This is Michael Sarto, anchorman for WCS TV. The recess is over and momentarily the hearing will be in session. Advocate Dante will call his first witness. The spectators are all sitting on the edge of their seats. The newspaper people sitting behind Judas’ table all have their notebooks and pens out, ready to write. The court deputy is striding to the microphone.”

“Ladies and gentleman, please rise. The World Court of Religion is now in session. The honorable judges will be taking their positions on the bench.”

As he finished speaking the six judges, headed by Solomon, filed into the courtroom. They were in the same sequence as in their first appearance. When all the judges were seated, Solomon announced, “Please be seated.” Everyone who had a seat, sat.

He turned to the other judges and asked, “Are all the judges ready to proceed?” He looked at each one and all nodded approval. “Since everything is in order, we shall proceed. Advocate Dante, are you ready to present your first witness?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Good. Before you do, I will make a statement for the court’s record. It will not be

necessary for any swearing-in of witnesses. Each witness will speak the truth and only the truth. As a result, all swearing-in will be completely dispensed with. Is it understood by both advocates?”

Each advocate had sort of a surprised look on his face. Each nodded. They understood.

The spectators were buzzing again. I’m sure they were taken aback by Solomon’s statement concerning the swearing-in process.

“Advocate Dante, please write out your first witness’ name and hand it to the court deputy. The court deputy will announce the name of the witness.”

Advocate Dante handed a slip of paper to the court deputy. The court deputy read it and strode to the microphone.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Advocate Dante has called Peter the Apostle to be a witness for Christianity.”

The same door, from which all the other individuals came, opened. Out walked, in a most majestic manner, Peter, the head Apostle. The hair on his head and beard were absolutely snow white. The hair was gleaming as the lights of the courtroom passed over him. He was dressed in a simple tunic and his face exuded health. All spectators could not believe what they were seeing. Richard would focus on Peter. He left it to me to tell the audience about the rest of the characters in the courtroom. The court deputy led Peter to the witness chair. As soon as Peter sat down, Advocate Dante approached.

"Please tell the World Court of Religion your name."

"My name is Peter the Apostle."

"Was Peter always your name?"

"No, it was not. Originally, my name was Simon."

"Why was your name changed and who changed it?"

"My name was changed from Simon to Peter by our Lord, Jesus Christ. He said to me, 'Your name will be Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.'

"Were you shocked that Jesus Christ chose you to be the leader of His church?"

"Yes, I was. I did what He wanted me to do. I gave my life to do His bidding."

"Now long were you with Jesus Christ?"

"I was with Him for the three years He spent on Planet Earth preaching."

"What did you do before you met Jesus Christ?"

"I was a fisherman."

"Did you have a family?"

"Yes, I did."

"Is it true that you left your family to follow Jesus Christ, and why did you do it?"

"Yes, it is true. I followed Jesus Christ because I felt He was the One sent to all of us on Planet Earth for salvation. I felt I had to complete His mission on Planet Earth."

Advocate Dante had a smile on his face a mile long when he heard Peter's answer. He

actually turned to the spectators and just nodded, as if to say, "You heard it. Right from the horse's mouth."

Advocate Dante turned to Peter and continued, "Would you say you were very close to Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I was extremely close to Jesus Christ. I was almost His right arm while He was on Planet Earth."

"How did you evaluate the other Apostles' love for Jesus Christ?"

"We all loved Jesus Christ. We found out much too late that there was one among us who did not love Him as much as the other eleven."

"Who was the Apostle who did not love Him as the other eleven?"

"The Apostle who did not love Jesus Christ as the other eleven was Judas Iscariot."

Richard put the camera on Judas as Peter called out his name. Judas went pale. Back to Peter.

"Is Judas Iscariot in this courtroom today?"

"Yes, he is. Judas Iscariot is sitting at the table." Peter pointed to Judas.

"Why do you say Judas did not love Jesus Christ?"

"I did not say Judas did not love Jesus Christ. In the beginning when we were first chosen by Jesus Christ, I am sure Judas did love Jesus Christ. All of us loved each other as brothers. We were on a special mission, directed by Jesus Christ, to save mankind."

"To save mankind?"

"To save mankind in the manner for all the souls of the human species to be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven again. The gates of Heaven were closed since the original sin of Adam and Eve. God the Father sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to Planet Earth for the sole purpose of Redemption."

"Was the Redemption completed?"

"Yes, it was completed."

"How was it completed?"

"It was completed in certain steps. Jesus Christ was born on Planet Earth by an Immaculate Conception of Mary. Jesus Christ stayed with his family, Mary and her husband Joseph. When ready, Jesus began to go forth and begin the main part of His mission. He began to preach to people anywhere and everywhere. Some accepted Him, most did not. Along the way He chose us, the Apostles. We numbered twelve in all. The twelve of us took part in and witnessed all of Jesus Christ's deeds for three years. At the end of the three years, He announced to the twelve of us His time on Planet Earth was almost complete. 'I now must suffer what I am to do. Afterward, I will join my Father in Heaven again.' We really did not understand what He was saying."

"What happened afterward?"

"We arrived in the city of Jerusalem. He asked John and myself to find a place where we would be able to celebrate the Passover feast. We really did not know where to go. Jesus Christ said

for us to follow a man who was carrying a pitcher. He would lead us to a certain room. We did what we were told, and we were led to the room in which we had the Last Supper."

"Honorable Judges, I object," shouted Advocate Calvin. "The testimony of Peter the Apostle is not related to this hearing. I ask the recent testimony is stricken from the record."

After glancing at the other judges, who had all turned their thumbs down, Judge Solomon spoke. "Advocate Calvin, your objection is overruled. It seems the witness' testimony is definitely leading up to a conclusion. The panel of judges wishes to hear what the witness is going to reveal."

Advocate Calvin had a dejected look as he sat. Judge Solomon turned to the witness. "Please continue your testimony."

Peter began to speak. "It was dusk and the twelve of us and Jesus were gathered in this room. We were about to begin eating. He began to say that one of the twelve would betray Him. All of us were mortified. Each one wondered who was the betrayer. I was most vehement. I kept saying that I would never betray Him. We urged John the Apostle, who was extremely close to the Master, to solicit the name of the betrayer.

"Our Lord answered in a low voice, 'It is he for whom I shall dip the bread, and give it to him.'

"He took the portion of unleavened bread, dipped it in the *Charoseth sauce* and handed it to Judas Iscariot. The Master said to Judas, 'The Son

of Man indeed goes His way, as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It is better for that man if he had not been born.' Feigning ignorance, Judas asked, 'Is it I, Rabbi?' The Master replied, 'Thou hast said it. What thou hast to do, do it quickly.'"

The spectators gasped. They could not believe what they were hearing. Condemnation from Jesus Christ himself, as told by Peter the Apostle. Judas looked straight ahead. Advocate Calvin did not look too happy either. He sure felt it would be a tough fight ahead.

Advocate Dante was ready to push on.

Judge Solomon interrupted. "Ladies and gentlemen, the panel of judges believe it is time for our noon recess. The hearing will continue after a two-hour break."

All the judges rose from their seats and followed Solomon out. The witness and all parties of the hearing also followed the judges out of the courtroom. When all the participants had left, the courtroom sounded like a stock exchange floor during business hours. The newspaper people literally flew out of the room to file a part of their stories. The spectators were trying to voice their opinions. Richard had his camera on everyone and anyone. I just let the picture of the courtroom do all the talking.

Finally I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure that you have found the testimony of Peter the Apostle most interesting. As the picture of the courtroom on your TV sets shows you, it is

pandemonium time in here. It looks like more fireworks will erupt when the hearing resumes this afternoon. Until then, take care."

I turned off the TV mike and said to the producer, "Sign off."

"Great show, Mr. Sarto. You still are number one."

**CHAPTER
IX
"RECESS TIME"**

I dialed the phone and Rose answered.
"Rose, what did you think of the hearing?"
"Michael, to say the least, I am flabbergasted. I could not believe what I was seeing, and what I was hearing. Both of the advocates were brilliant in their opening remarks.

As for the panel of judges, it would be an almost impossible group to follow. The analysts gave straightforward replies to your questions. Last but not least, Peter the Apostle's testimony has been mesmerizing. You did a beautiful job and Richard's camera work was most outstanding. Make sure to tell him that I said so."

"G.T., I knew I could get an unbiased opinion from you. I truly want to thank you. I would like to interview some of the spectators. I'm sure they would have quite a bit to say. Are you planning to watch the hearing when it resumes?"

"First of all, I am not a G.T. Secondly,

I wouldn't miss this afternoon's hearing for anything on this Planet Earth."

We both laughed.

"I'll see you later."

I placed down the phone and turned to Richard. "My wife asked me to relay to you her congratulations for your brilliant camera work this morning. She really doesn't know what she is

talking about. However, I agree with her this time." I finished the last sentence with a smile.

Richard just uttered, "Thank you and thank your wife. What do you want to do next?"

"What do you say we take the hand camera and interview some spectators? Not too many. Perhaps one or two. I'll ask the producer if we can slip them in at various times."

"Mr. Sarto, OK by me if you think it is safe enough to do."

"Sure thing, Mr. Sarto."

"Good, I'll ask Bos what he thinks of the idea." I called out to Bos. "I'd like to talk to you a moment."

"Bos, do you think it would be safe and wise if I would interview some of the spectators in the courtroom?"

"Mr. Sarto, at this present moment I really can't give you a truthful answer. My orders are for me to be glued to you while you are in the building. I'll get an answer for you by tomorrow morning. You never know, there might be some crackpots in the group. Why look for trouble? Why don't we take a break, have lunch and get ready for this afternoon's action?"

"Bos, the way you put it, you are right, one hundred percent. We can always do it some other time."

Richard was nodding his head, affirming the decision.

"Let's go to lunch, boys."

"Mr. Sarto, this way, we will get a great lunch in the cafeteria. I understand for the duration of the hearing, a buffet lunch is being offered free to all the media people and their guards. The networks are picking up the tab."

"Bos, you have just played some beautiful music into my ears."

The three of us chuckled. Sure enough, a most attractive buffet lunch was set up in the court cafeteria. A federal marshal checked all passes as we approached. As soon as he saw Bos, he waved us in. After taking a little of this and a little of that, the three of us finally reached a corner table. We began to eat and Bos shot out first.

"Mr. Sarto, what do you think of this morning's proceedings?"

Rose's words flashed in front of me. "Bos, to tell you the way I see it, both sides made some very valid points. I'm sure you will agree the opening remarks by both advocates made positive points. Peter the Apostle had most enlightening remarks in his testimony. What do you think, Richard?"

"Mr. Sarto, I tend to side with what you are saying. First, it sure seems very strange, to say the least, what is happening in room seventeen-oh-five. I get chicken-skin just thinking about it. I'm in there. I'm pointing my camera at these individuals who have made their marks in the annals of history.

Now, I am recording this event for possibly generations to come. The second point I wish to make is the manner of all the participants. Each

one, up to this point, has conducted himself in a manner that is above reproach. I'm sure there will be fireworks forthcoming. I am ready for the fireworks and looking forward to focusing on them."

Bos chirped in, "Gentlemen, I agree with what both of you are saying. I suggest you finish up. It is almost time to get back for the afternoon session."

I looked at my watch. I could not believe how the time flew by.

"Let's go, boys. It is almost showtime."

Bos led us back to room 1705.

session. Advocate Dante, please call your witness and continue where you left off."

Advocate Dante nodded to the chief deputy.

The chief deputy went to the microphone and announced, "Peter the Apostle, please come forward and take the seat in the witness stand." The door opened and Peter the Apostle strode in. His majestic manner was something to behold. He took his seat. Advocate Dante approached the witness. "Peter the Apostle, are you ready to continue your testimony from this morning's session?"

"Yes, I am."

"In your last remarks to the court, you stated that Jesus Christ gave the unleavened bread to Judas Iscariot, and told him to do the dastardly deed he was to do. Is that correct?"

"Yes, it is."

"Judas Iscariot left the room. Is that correct?"

"Yes, it is."

"Were you and the other Apostles bewildered why Judas Iscariot left the room?"

"Not really. Judas Iscariot held the money for our group. Perhaps Judas Iscariot was instructed to go and purchase other items for the supper. Apostle John was the only one who knew."

"What happened after Judas Iscariot left the room?"

"After he departed, we continued with the supper. During the supper, Jesus Christ took some bread, blessed it and gave each of us a portion. He

CHAPTER X

"AFTERNOON SESSION"

The three of us arrived at the hearing room. It was already packed. I was wondering if anyone went out to lunch or they had just sat there. Perhaps they would be afraid to lose their seats. Richard and I went into the booth. Bos took his seat. My earphone and mike were on and I began talking, "Checking one, two, three."

The producer answered, "All clear, Mr. Sarto. You are ready to go."

"Thanks, I'll go on as soon as the court deputy walks to the mike."

"Fine with me. Richard, keep your camera on the chief deputy. It looks like we are all set to go."

Just as the producer finished speaking, the chief deputy started to go to the microphone, "Ladies and gentlemen, the World Court of Religion is now in session. Please rise."

As the chief deputy finished speaking, the door from which all entered the hearing room opened, and the panel of judges filed in. As usual, Solomon headed the parade. They all took their usual seats on the bench. I was not talking at all. I let the camera and the sights of what was going on do the talking for me.

Chief Solomon began, "Ladies and gentlemen, the World Court of Religion is now in

said to us, 'Take and eat, this is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'"

"Were you surprised or confused at what Jesus Christ was doing?"

"Yes, I was, and some of the other Apostles also looked perplexed. Jesus Christ took a cup of wine, blessed it and gave it to us to take a sip. He said, 'All of you drink of this, for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which will be shed for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.' Yes, I was confused. How is this unleavened bread and wine the body and blood of Jesus Christ?"

"Did you say to Jesus Christ that you were confused?"

"No, I did not say it out loud. I knew Jesus Christ understood my confusion. He then gave us a new commandment. 'You must love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'"

Advocate Dante probed on, "Did He say anything else?"

"Yes, He said He will be going away soon."

"Did you ask where and why?"

"Yes. He answered, 'Where I am going, thou cannot follow me now, but thou shall follow later.' I questioned, 'Why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for thee.' Jesus Christ answered me, 'Will thou lay down thy life for me? Amen I say to thee, this very night, before the cock crows twice thou wilt deny me thrice.'"

Dante asked, "Did you deny Jesus Christ thrice as He said you would before the cock crowed twice?"

"Sad to say, yes, I did. Just as He said I would."

All in the courtroom seemed to take an extremely deep breath when Peter the Apostle spoke the last words of his admission of denial.

Dante looked at Peter the Apostle and asked, "Were you sorry at the point of your denial?" "My sorrow was impossible to describe. I was filled with total remorse and fled the scene in tears."

Dante spoke to the panel of judges, "Honorable Judges, I have no more questions to ask of this witness."

As Dante walked back to his seat, he appeared satisfied with the testimony of Peter the Apostle. The analyst panel made notes and seemed to be conferring with one another. The spectators were buzzing and, I might add, a little louder than earlier.

Solomon banged the gavel. "Ladies and gentlemen, please, some silence in the courtroom." The room went completely quiet.

Solomon turned to Advocate Calvin. "Advocate Calvin, are you ready to question the witness Peter the Apostle?"

While standing, Advocate Calvin replied, "If it pleases the panel of judges, I ask permission to first receive the testimony of two other witnesses. After their testimony is completed, I would ask

Peter the Apostle to return for further questioning. I assure the panel of judges the testimony of these two witnesses will be rather brief."

Solomon looked perplexed and glanced at the other five judges. Each one had his thumb up.

After seeing the reaction of the other five, Solomon announced, "Advocate Calvin, your request has been granted. Give the names of the witnesses to the court deputy. He will proceed to call them."

The spectators could not seem to figure out what Advocate Calvin was up to. The court deputy walked over to Advocate Calvin and read the slip on which was written the two names. He went to the microphone. "The first witness is the portress who confronted Peter the Apostle."

The spectators could not believe what they heard. Solomon banged the gavel for silence. The door opened and into the room strode this rather attractive woman. She walked behind the court deputy, who guided her to the witness stand. Advocate Calvin walked over to her and began speaking.

"Were you near Jesus Christ the night He was captured?"

"Yes, I was."

"Where were you exactly?"

"I was on the grounds of the House of Annas."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was employed as a portress."

"Did you allow any of the disciples to enter the grounds?"

"Yes, I did. Jesus Christ was led into the House of Annas. A little while later, John the Apostle entered and he asked permission for this other man to enter."

"Who was the other man?"

"I allowed both men to enter. At first I did not recognize the other man. When they both went to the fire, which was burning to warm the servants, I recognized the other man. I walked over to him and said to him, 'Thou also was with Jesus of Nazareth.'"

"What was his reply?"

"He vigorously denied it, crying, 'Woman, I do not know Him. I know not what thou art saying.'"

"Were there any other sounds?"

"As a matter of fact, there was. I heard the cock crow."

"What did you do after his denial?"

"I went back to my post at the gate. I just knew he was a follower of Jesus Christ. I mentioned it to others. He denied it again and also swore an oath."

"Again I ask you, who was the man you confronted?"

"The man was Peter the Apostle."

"No further questions."

The analyst panel members were doing their thing. Solomon was banging the gavel for quiet. Solomon turned to Advocate Dante.

"Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?"

Advocate Dante's answer was short and sweet. "No, I do not."

The portress left the stand. The court deputy went to the microphone. "The next witness will be the relative of Malchus."

The door opened and in walked a rather nondescript man. The spectators could be heard whispering, "Who is he?" Solomon banged the gavel for silence. The witness followed the court deputy to the witness stand and sat.

Advocate Calvin approached him and began questioning, "Were you in the yard of the House of Annas on the night Jesus Christ was arrested?"

"Yes, I was."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was employed as an attendant."

"Did you approach Peter the Apostle and accuse him of being a follower of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I did."

"Why did you?"

"I saw him in the garden with Jesus Christ. I went over and asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?'"

"What happened next?"

"Peter the Apostle turned on the group in a most furious manner. He was cursing and swearing. He was yelling that he did not know what we were talking about."

"Did anything else occur?"

"Yes, something did. I heard the crowing of a cock."

Advocate Calvin turned to the panel of judges. "No further questions."

Solomon asked, "Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?"

Advocate Dante answered the same as before, "No, I do not."

"Very well, the witness is excused. The World Court of Religion will recess until the morning."

The judges all followed Solomon out of the courtroom. Pandemonium exploded among the spectators. Richard's camera was flying all over the place. The newsmen could not wait to rush out and file their reports. I began to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen, there is no way I can possibly describe the tension which exists in this room at this moment. Peter the Apostle's testimony was most spellbinding. I would like you to listen in on my discussion with the analyst panel to try to receive a little insight."

"Analyst panel, do you hear me?"
Aristotle answered, "Yes, Mr. Sarto, we all do."

"Analyst Aristotle, generally speaking, what did you think of Peter the Apostle's testimony?"

"One must say his testimony was quite forthright. Naturally he spoke the truth and said what he knew of the questions asked."

"Analyst Martin Luther, did you think it was justified for Advocate Dante to question Peter the Apostle about his denial of Jesus Christ?"

"It was certainly justified. Advocate Dante was attempting to show the panel of judges there was no attempt at hiding anything."

"Analyst Sir Thomas More, did you find the manner of Advocate Calvin surprising? First he calls on these two witnesses and later will question Peter the Apostle."

"I believe it is a brilliant move. The testimony of the two witnesses has etched in everyone's mind the fact of the denial. Believe me, more will be forthcoming."

"Again, thank you all. I am sure we will be speaking more before the hearing is completed."

"Yes, Mr. Sarto. I am positive we will."

"Ladies and gentlemen, today you have heard and seen an extraordinary spectacle. You have also heard and seen what the lawyer analyst panel had to say. The courtroom is finally becoming empty. There doesn't seem to be anything more to say. Just take care and tune in tomorrow at nine in the morning. WCS TV will be bringing you live every moment of the hearing, *Judas On Appeal.*"

The mike was cut to the audience, and I motioned to Richard to cut. "That's it for today," I told the producer.

"Mr. Sarto, you are number one. Nothing more to be said."

"Thank you," I replied.

My gear was off. Bos was waiting for Richard and me to go out. Bos' first words when I was next to him were, "Mr. Sarto, I could not believe what I was seeing and hearing."

"Bos, neither could I."

**CHAPTER
XI
“HEADING HOME”**

Bos led us out of the courtroom. We went into the elevator, which took us to the main lobby. As we walked to the front entrance, Officer Ryan was waiting for me in the vestibule. I turned to Bos and Richard. “Take good care, both of you. I’ll see you tomorrow morning around eight-thirty.”

They both bid me a good night.

Ryan looked quite happy to see me. “Mr. Sarto, you sure did a super job today. I was amazed how smoothly you handled the telecast.”

“Thanks, Ryan. It might have looked easy, but I assure you, it was far from easy. What’s next?”

“Mr. Sarto, I had Louis move your limo right at the corner. I will ride with you to your apartment building. After we arrive there, I will radio the precinct to have a car pick me up. I’ll be at your building at seven-thirty in the morning, to ride back here to start your day.”

“Fine with me, if those are your instructions. I hope it isn’t too much of a bother for you.”

“Mr. Sarto, it is my job, and I could not have asked for a better assignment.”

“Glad you feel that way. I think we’d better get going.”

We headed out of the courthouse, down the steps toward the limo. Ryan was almost glued to

me. I took notice of his holding the butt of his pistol in his right hand as we walked to the limo. The people were still behind the barricades. I would have thought they would have dispersed by now. Maybe they might catch a glimpse of some of the main characters. I will make it a point to interview some of them sometime soon. I’m sure it will be most interesting. Their remarks will certainly be diverse.

We reached the limo. Louis had the back door open for me. Louis closed the door behind me. Ryan went to the other side and sat in the front passenger seat.

“Louis, head home.”

“Mr. Sarto, with pleasure. By the way, sir, you did an excellent telecast as usual.”

“Thanks, Louis. I’m a little tired now. It was a most emotional day, to say the least. If you don’t mind, I’ll rest a while until we get home.”

“Fine with me, Mr. Sarto. You are the boss.”

The ride home was uneventful. Hardly anyone spoke. All of a sudden I felt emotionally drained. The high-pitched tension of the day finally caught up with me. Within a little while, Louis was pulling up in front of the apartment building. Pete, the doorman, rushed out and opened the back door. I got out, so did Ryan. He spoke first. “Mr. Sarto, I’ll be here at seven-thirty sharp. Get a good night’s rest.”

"Thanks, Ryan, I'll be looking forward to sleep tonight. See you in the morning. Louis, seven-thirty in the morning, OK?"

"Sure, Mr. Sarto. I'll be here."

As I started to walk into the lobby, Pete was on my tail. "Mr. Sarto, the show was outstanding today. I can't wait until it comes back on in the morning. You were great."

"Thanks, Pete. Please buzz Mrs. Sarto. Tell her I am on my way up."
"You bet."

CHAPTER XII "TRYING TO RELAX"

I opened my apartment door. Rose ran over to me, threw her arms around me, and planted a kiss right on my lips.

"My hero is finally home. Come in and see what your G.T. has prepared for *His Majesty*."

"G.T., do I detect a bit of sarcasm?"

"Oh no, Your Majesty. Your G.T. only wishes to make the time which you will spend on Planet Earth as pleasurable and as enjoyable as humanly possible."

"G.T., what you are saying at this point brings back into my mind an old Italian adage. Literally translated, the adage is, 'When the Devil caresses you, he wants your soul.' Therefore, I ask you, do want my soul?"

"Master, to tell you the truth, I want anything and everything that you are capable of giving."

We both hugged and laughed.

"Michael, go take a shower. Your pajamas and robe are on the bed. I'll get you a glass of wine, filled with ice. I have prepared a delicious dinner, which I am sure you will enjoy. Later we can talk about the day's happenings. Most of all I would like you to relax."

"I had the relaxation point right at the tip of my nose. While riding home tonight, I felt

completely drained. The tension of the day just caught up to me.”

“Go take your shower.”

I went into the bedroom, took off my clothes and then went into the shower. The hot water poured all over every inch of my body. As the water hit the sore muscles, I could feel the tension evaporating. After about ten minutes of this routine, I turned off the water, grabbed the towel, and began drying myself. After drying off, I splashed some Paul Sebastian over myself and went into the bedroom to put on my pajamas. Rose walked into the bedroom just as I had finished putting on the pajamas. The phone rang.

“Michael, I’ll get it.” She picked up the phone and answered, “Hello.” She listened a moment. “Why hello, Mr. Worthington. How are you? You sound fine over the loud music in the background.” She made me understand he was somewhere at a party. “Yes, Mr. Worthington, Michael is home and he is taking a shower. To tell you the truth, he came home completely exhausted from his day at the courtroom. I’m sure you can understand why he would be exhausted, if you watched the telecast. You did watch the telecast, didn’t you? Michael did a marvelous job, don’t you think? Yes, I know you were pleased the way

Michael handled everything. Yes, I will make sure to tell him how impressed you were. Yes, I will ask him to call you sometime during a recess break tomorrow morning. Yes, he will call you at the

office. Now you take care of yourself, and get home safe.”

With those last words she placed the telephone back on the receiver. She turned to me. “You know it was the alcoholic. Only the Lord knows where he was calling from. The music sounded like a hard rock metal band. Girls were constantly laughing in the background. The alcoholic was slurring so bad, it was impossible for him to speak a complete sentence.”

“Now, don’t be too harsh on Mr. Worthington, you know he pays my salary. I must say it is a princely sum.”

“You can get a job on any of the networks. They all would love to have you as their anchorman.”

“Remember, loyalty is an important key. Worthington gave me my first big break. He always allows me to call my shots. Never questions when I renew the contract. Weighing the pros and cons, the pros certainly outweigh the cons.”

“I would do the same as Worthington, since you bring WCS the one or two rating every year.”

“Rose, enough of Worthington, what’s for dinner?”

“Come, Your Majesty, dinner is about to be served.”

We walked into the dining room. Rose had a table set with lighted candles and flowers as a centerpiece. A glass of wine with ice was set at my usual place. A salad bowl was to one side. Rose walked out of the kitchen into the dining room. She

was carrying a huge white platter. On the platter was a steak the size of the platter.

"Your Majesty, a steak, just the way you wish. It is medium broiled. I seasoned it with olive oil, oregano, and black pepper. You will add the salt to your taste."

"G.T., if the steak tastes as good as it smells, I will give to you the keys to the kingdom."

We both laughed. She placed the platter on the table and cut portions of the steak. Some for me and some for her. We said our prayers before we began to eat. She took the wine glass and made a toast.

"Michael, to a most successful hearing."

"That is a great toast."

We both drank and began eating.

I started the ball rolling. "Did you think the hearing progressed as you thought it would?"

"The hearing surpassed anything imaginable. It had all possible forms of drama. It had tensions, surprises, twists and most of all it has charisma. When Judas walked in with Calvin, some would laugh but some might hate. When the analysts came in, some might marvel. When the judges appeared, some might be struck with awe. However, when Peter the Apostle came in, the entire courtroom just seemed to light up. His presence was something to behold. I could not take my eyes off the television. As I told you earlier, Richard did great camera work during the entire proceedings. Not to give you a big head—you were

just great, and I was very proud being Mrs. Michael Sarto." She leaned over and kissed my face.

"I just hope the television audience had the same reactions. If they did, our ratings will go through the roof. Worthington will certainly look to give me a raise when I renew my contract."

She responded, "Forget the raise, what is happening tomorrow?"

"The way I see it, Calvin will have Peter back on the stand. He will try to highlight Peter's denial of Jesus Christ. The reason he had those two witnesses on the stand today was to confirm Peter's denial. He now will go after Peter himself. I feel he has something up his sleeve but I can't put my finger on it. I'll have to wait until the hearing begins again before I am able to find out."

I had taken my last bite of the steak and finished up the wine. So did Rose.

"Would you like some dessert now?"

"Perhaps later. I'm set."

"OK, some hot espresso to aid digestion."

"Make it a double, very hot."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

She went to fetch the espresso. The intercom buzzer rang. Rose answered. I could hear, It was the doorman.

"Mrs. Sarto, an Officer Ryan is here. He says he has very important news for Mr. Sarto."

Rose answered, "Hold on, please." She turned to me. "Michael, did you hear the doorman? What do you want him to do?"

EXHIBIT 1
Part 2
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

"If Ryan came back here tonight, it must be very important. Have him come up."

Rose went back to the intercom. "Please have Officer Ryan come up."

"Yes, Mrs. Sarto."

Within a few minutes, there was a light tap at the door. Rose went to the door and opened it.

"Good evening, I am Officer Ryan. May I see Mr. Sarto?"

"Yes, come in. We were just about to have some espresso. Would you like some?"

"No, thank you. I really do not want to disturb you. I am fine."

I walked into the vestibule.

"Officer Ryan, a pleasant surprise. Come into the living room and fill me in on what is so important."

He followed me into the living room and sat on the couch opposite me. Rose made it her business to stay out of the living room.

"Mr. Sarto, I really did not want to disturb you tonight. I knew you had a tough day today,"

"No problem, Ryan. If you came back here it had to be important."

"Mr. Sarto, I have a good friend of mine, Police Officer Anthony Luchs. He is on the Police Task Force. They rush to all spots where possible trouble will erupt. Usually they are rushed to demonstrations and things of similar nature. He knew of my assignment with you. He called me at home tonight. He heard of a possible demonstration at the courthouse early tomorrow morning. Some

right-wing Christian groups do not like what is going on. The Task Force is not sure if there would be any violence. They are not taking any chances. You know what happened at some abortion clinics?"

"Yes, I know. Please continue."

"To make sure nothing happens to you when you arrive, I thought of something."

"What is it, Ryan?"

"Well, I am going to call the federal marshal's office. I will ask them to have Bos come down to the limo when you arrive. I'll get out first. Bos will be outside the limo and he will fall immediately behind you when you exit. I'll be in front of you. The three of us will walk up the steps as though we were a sandwich. In addition, here is a bulletproof vest. I would like you to put it on before you leave here in the morning."

"Ryan, are you sure this is happening?"

"Mr. Sarto, right now I am not sure of anything, but I trust Anthony. I do not want to take any chances whatsoever."

"Ryan, if what you say could be true, I must trust your judgment. Thanks for everything. Are you sure you don't want any refreshment?"

"No, Mr. Sarto. I'm fine. I'm glad you understand. Good night."

longer to ask, "Mr. Sarto, what do you think is happening?"

CHAPTER XIII "MINOR CONFRONTATION"

The next morning I was about to leave at seven-thirty. Rose had her arms around me. While kissing me, she was telling me to be careful. Most of all, she told me to keep my mouth shut. "Speak only when it is absolutely necessary," were her last words as I walked out the door.

When I walked into the lobby, Officer Ryan was waiting. Louis had the limo out front. Pete hustled out to the limo to open the back door. Good-mornings were exchanged all around. I went into the back seat. Ryan went into the front passenger side. He turned around to ask, "Mr. Sarto, do you have on what I gave you last night?" "Yes, I do."

"Good. I'm happy to hear it."

Louis looked at Ryan and glared into the rearview mirror. He had a quizzical look on his face. He had no idea what we were talking about. He was dying to ask but didn't. Though he did ask, "Mr. Sarto, did you have a good night of sleep?" "Not bad, Louis. Not bad."

As we were approaching the courthouse, I could see many more police officers than yesterday. We started to hear people shouting. At first I was not able to make it out. As we were getting closer, the shouts were more understandable. Louis seemed to be getting nervous. He couldn't wait any

Ryan answered for me. "Louis, keep calm and keep on driving slowly. Head for that line of cops on the far left. There will be an alley behind the barriers. You will be able to drive right to the bottom of the steps leading up to the courthouse." Louis could only answer, "OK, Ryan." I finally made out the shouts.

"Keep the bum in Hell! Let him burn!"
"Keep the bum in Hell! Let him burn!"

"Keep the bum in Hell! Let him burn!"
As we were getting close to the police line, I saw the placards being pushed up and down.

"Burn in Hell, bum, burn in Hell!"

Out there screaming were men, women and children. Young and old were chanting to beat the band.

"Keep the bum in Hell! Let him burn!"
"Keep the bum in Hell! Let him burn!"
I turned to Ryan. "You were right."

"Mr. Sarto, I knew Luhs would not lie to me. Louis, keep on going and get behind the barricades. Stop near the spot where the steps end. Bos will be there waiting for us."

Louis asked, "Ryan, are you sure?"

Ryan answered with a command. "Louis, I'm positive. Just drive behind the barricade and stop when I tell you."

Louis did not say a word. He just drove. As soon as the limo pulled behind the barricade, Ryan spotted Bos.

**CHAPTER
XIV
“CALVIN’S FIRST ATTACK”**

“Louis, drive to where Bos is standing and stop right there. Mr. Sarto, do not get out of the car until I tell you. Louis, you sit. Do not get out.”

As soon as Bos spotted the limo, he came down to the street. Louis drove up to him. Ryan jumped out. He waited for Bos to come around the back of the limo. Ryan opened the door. He stood in front of me as I exited. The split second I was out, Bos was glued behind me. We appeared as three soldiers walking in perfect step up the courthouse steps.

We all heard the chants and they were getting louder. “Keep the bum in Hell! Burn in Hell! Keep the bum in Hell! Burn in Hell!”

“Mr. Sarto, don’t look back. Just walk straight up to the entrance. Bos will take over as soon as you are inside.”

“Ryan, the only thing I can say to you is thank you.”

“Not necessary, just do a great show. OK, Bos, he is all yours.”

“Ryan, I’ll take good care of him.”

Meanwhile they were still shouting. “Keep the bum in Hell! Burn in Hell!”

As soon as we entered the courtroom, Bos guided me to the elevator bank. An elevator was waiting and in we went. The federal marshal knew who we were and went straight up to the seventeenth floor. Nothing much was said while going up. When we exited, Bos asked, “Mr. Sarto, does it look like it is going to get a little ugly out there?”

“Bos, I think it is only the beginning. I would expect it to get much more hectic before everything is over.”

“Well, Mr. Sarto, I guess Ryan and I myself must always be on our toes.”

“Don’t fret about it. I’m sure the two of you will do what you were trained to do. That is good enough for me.”

We walked into 1705. The courtroom was already packed with spectators. I looked up and saw that Richard was in the booth. I walked up. I turned to Bos. “See you later, buddy. It looks like a big day ahead.”

“Mr. Sarto, go do what you must do. I’ll be right where I am supposed to be. See you.”

I entered the booth. Richard and I exchanged good-mornings. Richard was all set to go on the air. I put on the earphones and

microphone, turned on the microphone to the truck.
"Checking one-two, checking one-two."

"You are loud and clear, Mr. Sarto. It is now ten minutes to post time. We will go live at eight fifty-five. It will take about five minutes for the preliminary action. The panel of judges will walk in at nine sharp."

"Fine. I'll take care of some notes. Just let me know when it's sixty seconds to air time."
"You got it."

"Richard, I think this is going to be a most hectic session. Calvin is probably going to call Peter back to the stand. Even when Calvin is questioning Peter, make sure to switch to the spectators and the analyst panel from time to time. It will be good to see the various reactions. I'm sure the reactions will be as interesting as the testimony."

Richard nodded and his nod was good enough for me. As I finished some other notes I heard in my earphone, "Mr. Sarto, sixty seconds to post time."

"OK. Thanks. Richard, are you ready?"
Again Richard nodded.

The court deputy walked to the microphone. I began speaking. "Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I am Michael Sarto of WCS-TV. We are now live in the federal courthouse at Foley Square in New York City. The second day of the hearing of *Judas On Appeal* is about to begin. You can see the court deputy approaching the microphone. Let us listen."

The court deputy announced, "The analyst panel will now enter the courtroom." The side door opened and in walked Aristotle, followed by Martin Luther and Sir Thomas More. They sat.

The court deputy announced, "Advocate Dante, for Christianity." Out of the side door came Dante. He went to his seat.

The court deputy announced, "Advocate Calvin and his client Judas Iscariot." In walked Advocate Calvin and Judas Iscariot. They took their places at the designated table.

I noticed the newspaper people switched this morning. Perhaps it was a way for all of the press people to get closer to the main characters. I wondered why they were seated behind Judas' table. I'd try to get the answer to why.

The court deputy announced, "All please rise. The World Court of Religion is now in session. The judges panel will now enter." Sure enough, the side door opened. Solomon led the parade of judges. Each one went to the seat that he had occupied yesterday.

Solomon took over. "Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Are all the judges ready?" They all nodded. Seeing the affirmative, he turned to the two advocates. "Advocate Dante, are you ready?"

"Yes, I am."

"Advocate Calvin, are you ready?"

"Yes, I am."

"Good, let us proceed where we left off yesterday. I believe Advocate Calvin will summon a witness. Please do so."

Advocate Calvin handed a slip to the court deputy. The court deputy announced, "Peter the Apostle, come forth."

The side door opened and in walked Peter the Apostle in all his majestic splendor. While all this was going on, I wasn't talking. I was letting speaking. I glanced around the courtroom do all the spectators were sitting at the edge of their seats. Some were straining forward to make sure they heard every single utterance. The court deputy guided Peter the Apostle to the witness stand. Once Peter was settled in the seat, Advocate Calvin approached. He looked square into the witness' face. He began, "Are you Peter, the Apostle?"

"Yes, I am."

"Were you the one who was formerly named Simon, the fisherman?"

"Yes."

"Was the name changed from Simon to Peter by Jesus Christ?"

"Yes."

"Did you listen to the testimony of the two witnesses that I questioned yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes, I did."

"Let us now go back a bit. Did Jesus Christ reveal to you that you would deny him thrice before the cock would crow twice?"

"Yes, He did."

"When did He make that revelation?"

"He revealed it to me during our Last Supper together."

"When He made the denial revelation to you, did you deny it vehemently?"

"Yes, I did."

"Do you recall what you answered?"

"Yes. I answered that I would never deny Him."

"Fine, now let us go forward. I am sure you recall the scene when Jesus was arrested."

"Yes, I do."

"After he was arrested, where did you go and with whom?"

"After He was arrested, we were frightened. John and I followed the group who arrested Jesus to the House of Annas."

"Did you know why He was taken to the House of Annas?"

"We presumed He was taken there for questioning."

"Once Jesus Christ was taken into the house, where did you go?"

"John and I were outside the grounds. We both felt that we had to get onto the grounds."

"How were the two of you going to enter the gates of the property?"

"John knew the portress. He walked up to the gate and spoke to her. She allowed John in. John asked her to allow me to enter."

"Did she allow you in?"

"Yes, she did."

"Once you were inside, what did you do?"

"John and I tried to mingle with the people. We did not want to look conspicuous. I was trying

to find out why Jesus Christ was arrested. Perhaps the people on the property of Annas, the High Priest, might have answers.

"When did the portress come over to you and accuse you of being a follower of Jesus Christ?"

"I was sitting by the fire amongst others. She came over to me and said that I was a follower of Jesus Christ!"

"What was your response?"

"I denied it."

"Were you vehement when you recited your denial?"

"Yes, I was."

"Did anything else happen at that moment?"

"Yes."

"What happened?"

"The cock crowed."

The spectators gasped. Solomon banged the gavel for silence. Richard was now switching back and forth with his camera. The expressions on the spectators' faces made the saying come completely true, "A picture says a thousand words." In this case, the picture on the screen spoke a million words.

Advocate Calvin was all warmed up. He was ready for any and all action. "Did the portress leave you after her first accusation?"

"Yes, she did."

"Where did she go?"

"I presumed she went back to her post at the gate."

"What happened next?"

"She came back again, and she accused me a second time."

"Did you deny the accusation again?"

"Yes, I did."

"Were you more vehement in your denial the second time?"

"Sad to say, yes, I was."

"Up to this point, as far as the testimony of the portress is concerned, she was correct?"

"Yes, her testimony was correct."

"Good, now let us go on. Who was the individual who made the third accusation?"

"The one who made the third accusation was a relative of Malchus."

"Please tell the court who was Malchus."

"Malchus was one of the group who came to arrest Jesus Christ. When the group attempted to arrest Jesus Christ, I drew my sword."

"What did you do?"

"I took my sword and struck the ear off Malchus' head."

"You cut off Malchus' ear?"

"Yes, I did."

"What happened next?"

"Jesus Christ picked up Malchus' ear and put it back on Malchus' head. Jesus also reprimanded me for resorting to the use of my sword."

"How did Jesus Christ reprimand you?"

"He told me if He wanted, there would be ten legions of angels to protect Him."

"Did you know that the man who came to accuse you of being a follower was related to Malchus?"

"Not then, but I was later informed."

"When the man came to accuse you of being a follower, were you surprised?"

"Yes, I was. He said since I sounded as a Galilean would sound, I must be a follower of Jesus Christ, who was a Galilean."

"What was your retort?"

"I turned on them furiously, cursing and swearing. I told them they did not know what they were talking about."

"Did anything happen while you were denying the accusation?"

"Yes, the cock crowed a second time. I looked up into a window in the house. I saw Jesus Christ look at me. I burst into tears and ran from the grounds. I realized the revelation of Jesus Christ came to pass. I was filled with total remorse."

"You were filled with total remorse?"

"Yes, I was."

"Were you at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I was there."

Richard had his camera on some of the spectators. Tears were running down their faces. Everyone in the courtroom seemed to be most uncomfortable. Advocate Calvin was pressing on full speed ahead. No stopping now. He wanted to back Peter the Apostle into some sort of a corner.

"Did you see Jesus Christ again after the crucifixion?"

"Yes, I did."

"When was the next time you saw Jesus Christ?"

"I saw Jesus Christ after His Resurrection."

"How many times did you see Jesus Christ after the Resurrection?"

"I believe it was two or three times."

"Did you speak to Jesus Christ when you saw Him?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did Jesus Christ speak to you at these meetings?"

"Yes, He did."

Now the courtroom just seemed to freeze over. One explosion was about to happen. Richard's camera darted back and forth. "First, let me ask this question. Where is your soul at the present time?"

"My soul is in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"What do you do in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

"I am the gatekeeper."

"I see. You are the gatekeeper. You also are the individual who denied Jesus Christ on three separate occasions. Is it true?"

"Yes, it is true."

"Since it is true, you also admit that you spoke to Jesus Christ, and He spoke to you after His crucifixion. Is it true?"

"Yes, it is true."

"When you spoke to each other, did you verbally ask for forgiveness for denying Him?"
"No, I did not."

"Then, if you did not ask for forgiveness when you spoke to Him, tell the court how your soul was allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."
The spectators were almost standing. They were waiting with bated breath for the answer to Advocate Calvin's question.

Peter the Apostle did not flinch one iota. He paused a moment, then answered, "It is true, I did not ask for forgiveness by speech. I asked for forgiveness by action. I gave up my life for Christianity when I was martyred."

A gasp exploded from the spectators.

Solomon was banging away, calling for silence.
Advocate Calvin announced, "No further questions."

Solomon immediately spoke. "The World Court of Religion is now in recess until this afternoon."

The judges rose from their seats and filed out.

CHAPTER XV "ANALYST PANEL DISCUSSION"

I turned my microphone on and asked the producer if the analysts had their line open. He told me it was on. "Richard, please zero in on the analysis. Analyst panel, this is Michael Sarto, do you hear me?"

"Yes, we do."

"I would like to hear some of your reactions to this morning's session."

"We will be happy to oblige you."

"Sir Thomas More, do you think Advocate Calvin was attempting to place Peter the Apostle in some sort of a corner?"

"Mr. Sarto, Advocate Calvin was doing his best to do just what you are asking."

"Do you feel he succeeded?"

"In a way, he certainly did. I feel he will use the testimony of Peter the Apostle to be a stepping stone to win his case."

"Aristotle, do you feel it was morally right for Advocate Calvin to go after Peter the Apostle in the manner in which he did?"

"Mr. Sarto, please understand one point. Advocate Calvin was chosen to represent Judas Iscariot. I am sure he was given permission to use any and all means necessary to pursue the main goal."

"Is the main goal the entrance of Judas Iscariot's soul into Heaven?"

"Mr. Sarto, you are one hundred percent correct. The main goal is that Judas Iscariot's soul would be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Martin Luther, how did you perceive the actions of Advocate Calvin?"

"Mr. Sarto, to say the least he was most relentless with his questioning. I felt Advocate Calvin scored some major points, and I agree with Sir Thomas about Advocate Calvin, who will use this morning's testimony as a stepping stone to win his case."

"Gentlemen, I thank the three of you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you. Also, I thank you for sharing your thoughts with the audience of WCS TV. Hopefully, we will speak again in the near future."

Aristotle spoke for the panel. "Mr. Sarto, we thank you, and we will be happy to oblige you in the future."

I turned to Richard and gave him the sign to put me on camera. He did. I spoke, "Ladies and gentlemen, I imagine you folks must have been mesmerized as I was, and perhaps as all the spectators were. This morning's proceedings had the tensions and drama that motion picture directors crave to achieve. Sometimes the action is right under your nose, and you don't recognize it. I am sure you recognized the tensions and the drama. I am also positive that many of you will cherish these moments for the rest of your lives. Ladies and

Gentlemen, I am Michael Sarto, WCS TV, and will return this afternoon when the hearing of *Judas On Appeal* resumes. Take care."

I motioned to Richard to cut and he did. He spoke first. "Mr. Sarto, I do not know how I kept on going. I had my camera on the action, but I did not believe what I was hearing and seeing."

"Richard, don't be upset. I felt exactly how you just expressed yourself. It was impossible to believe how Calvin was setting Peter up. You could see how he was placing each piece to the puzzle. One by one. When he asked Peter if he asked for forgiveness verbally, I said to myself, he has Peter in the corner. When Peter answered the way he did, Peter was able to slip out of the corner to a certain extent."

"Mr. Sarto, I bet we will see much more fireworks before this is over."

"Richard, no bookmaker will take your bet. Let's get Bos and head for lunch."

**CHAPTER
XVI
“CONFRONTATION AT ST. PATRICK’S”**

As soon as I came out of the booth, Bos was by my side. He looked a bit perturbed. “Bos, what is wrong?”

“Mr. Sarto, I received word from the office. This afternoon’s session has been cancelled. There will be a demonstration outside of St. Patrick’s Cathedral around two this afternoon.”

“Who is going to be demonstrating?”

“The office believes the demonstrators are supporting Judas. They don’t really know how many will show up. The police commissioner is not taking any chances. He has ordered the Police Task Force to take positions, and set up barricades. Ryan will probably give you more details. I am sure you will want to get up there. I would love to go with you, but it is out of our territory.”

“Bos, I understand. I’ll have the producer run a strip over our network to alert everyone of the cancellation. I will find out if one of our trucks will go there so I can report live from the scene. Please wait a moment.”

I went back into the booth and rang up the producer. “Hi, Michael Sarto here. Did you hear anything about the cancellation here, and the demonstration at St. Patrick’s?”

“Mr. Sarto, I heard it just a minute ago. I was planning to run a strip to alert our network. Are you going up to the Cathedral?”

“I sure am. Can you have a truck sent there?”

“No problem. I am positive the police closed off the area, but they probably will allow the television trucks to slip in somewhere. Look between Fifty-First and Fifty-Second Streets on Fifth Avenue. You probably can shoot from the top of the truck. Bring Richard with you.”

“I’m glad you and I were thinking along the same lines. I’ll check with you when I get there.” I then turned to Richard, who was sitting in the booth. “Buddy, we will skip lunch and get up to the Cathedral.”

“Mr. Sarto, anything you say. I’m ready.” Out we went and Bos escorted us down to the lobby of the courthouse. Ryan was waiting at the entrance for me to show up. “Mr. Sarto, did you hear what is happening?”

“I heard some, but not all.”

“There is going to be a major demonstration by Judas’ supporters. It is supposed to begin about two. Anthony is already there and phoned my wife. She beeped me, and she told me of the demonstration when I spoke to her. It wasn’t too much of a secret. Right now everybody seems to know. There might be some ugly scenes, and the police officers have all been ordered to wear riot gear. I suppose you are going there?”

“Ryan, what do you think?”

"Mr. Sarto, I thought of something. It might get us up there real quick. Do you have a dark pair of shades?"

"I do, as a matter of fact. They are in my briefcase."

"Good, let's see if you can borrow a hat from someone in the marshal's office. If you can, it will be perfect. You have the vest on, the shades, and the hat will hide you pretty well. We will take the subway up to Fifty-First Street. No limo to buck the traffic. We will be there in no time."

"Ryan, good idea. I'll ask Bos if he can find a hat for me." Bos was nearby and heard what Ryan and I were discussing. Before I knew it, out came Bos from the office with a fedora.

"Mr. Sarto, please bring it back with no holes in it." He said it with a smile which lit the room.

"Bos, I promise. If there are holes in this hat, I'll buy two of them for the owner."

I dug out the dark shades from my briefcase, put on the fedora and exclaimed, "Boys, let's go."

"Mr. Sarto, one minute, I must tell Louis to go home. We won't need him anymore today. I'll figure out a way to get you home. Wait here."

I saw Ryan run down to the limo, which was parked at the bottom of the steps. He was giving Louis instructions. Louis was nodding his head. Nothing else. When he was through, Ryan raced back up.

"Mr. Sarto, we are on our way. Just look and walk very casual. Make it look like nothing is

happening." Down the steps we went. Within a few minutes the three of us were at the subway entrance. The crowd outside seemed to be breaking up.

Ryan spoke to Richard. "Please buy two tokens. I don't want to leave Mr. Sarto's side."

Richard bought the tokens. He placed them into the turnstile. He walked in front, then me, and Ryan squeezed himself behind me. No one bothered to question, since Ryan was in uniform. The train pulled in almost immediately. It was very crowded for early afternoon. I was wondering how many would be going to the demonstration. The three of us hardly spoke. It looked as though we were strangers. Less than twenty minutes later, the train pulled into the Fifty-First Street station. Everybody seemed to be piling out of the subway. Up the stairs and onto the sidewalk. I was shocked at what I saw. The sidewalk and streets were packed with people. Cars were just sitting there. No movement whatsoever. Some horns were blowing, and some drivers were cursing some very choice words. It was to no avail. Ryan was glued to me. He just kept on saying, "Keep cool. Act nonchalant."

I did what he was suggesting. We had exited at Lexington Avenue and Fifty-First Street. We were walking westward toward Fifth Avenue. I was telling Ryan that I had to look for the truck. "Mr. Sarto, let's get there first, then we will look for the truck."

Richard did not say a word. He acted as if he was a tourist. We reached Madison Avenue and I could see the crowd was starting to get noisy. I began to pick up what they were chanting.

"Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul! Let him into Heaven! Let him into Heaven! Free Judas' soul!"

Banners and placards were now appearing.

A van was in the street. A man was on top of the van with a loudspeaker, urging the crowd on. "Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul!" The crowd picked it up. They chimed in, "Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul!"

In a way it looked like a fairyland set-up. In my bones, I felt different. I knew something weird was going to happen. When and how, I did not know for sure. My instincts were seldom wrong when I had a certain feeling.

We arrived at Fifth Avenue and as luck would have it, the WCS truck was parked right off the corner of Fifty-First and Fifth.

"Ryan, you did it again, safe and sound." "Mr. Sario, do what you got to do. I am right here outside the truck."

"Thanks again, Ryan." Richard followed me in as if he were a puppy.

"Mr. Sario, I am happy you are here. Everything is ready to roll. You and Richard will be on the top of the truck. You will have a clear shot of the Cathedral and the crowd. The police have the area cordoned off pretty good. They will try to keep the demonstrators away from the

Cathedral steps. I hope they do. It might get ugly if they can't."

"We just have to wait and see what happens. Richard, on top."

We walked up the steps to the roof of the truck. Now I only saw wall-to-wall people and the Cathedral looked as though it was on an island, all by itself.

A van was in the street. A man was on top of the van with a loudspeaker, urging the crowd on. "Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul!"

"Testing one-two."

"Loud and clear. You are on."

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am Michael Sario, WCS TV, reporting to you live from right outside of St. Patrick's Cathedral. As you probably know by now, the afternoon session of the *Judas On Appeal* hearing was cancelled. The authorities thought it was wise to cancel because this demonstration might cause some danger. As you can see and hear, the supporters of Judas have rallied behind him. The purpose of this demonstration is to let the Cardinal know and perhaps the rest of the world know of their belief that Judas' soul should be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Screams from the crowd: "Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul! Allow Judas into Heaven! Allow Judas into Heaven! Free Judas' soul!"

"The police are all in riot gear and are standing in front of the barricades. I understand the barricades were set up as soon as the commissioner heard of the demonstration."

There it went. The first egg went flying through the air. It landed on the steps of the Cathedral. In a few moments, more are flying. Screams, "Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul! If Peter is in Heaven, so should Judas! If Peter is in Heaven, so should Judas!"

"A new wrinkle has developed. The crowd is chanting that Judas should be in Heaven with Peter. An extremely interesting point. More eggs are flying. Now tomatoes are joining the eggs. Some of the police are being splattered."

Off the microphone, I whispered, "Richard, keep the camera moving all over. Crowd, police, Cathedral. Don't let up one minute." Richard just nodded as usual.

"Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul!"

"Richard, train the camera on those two. They have masks on. One is Peter and one is Judas. They are hugging and kissing like two long-lost brothers. The crowd is going wild."

"Let Judas' soul into Heaven! Let Judas' soul into Heaven! Cardinal, come out! Cardinal, you coward, come out!"

It started to get a little more nasty. The crowd was chanting for the Cardinal to come out of the Cathedral. They were starting to lunge and push toward the steps. The police were now facing the crowds and they were holding batons in their hands. I hoped it would not get real ugly.

"Cardinal, come out! Coward, come on out!"

Tomatoes and eggs were flying in rapid succession. You could see the police were starting to become a little more impatient. The police captain was walking around the officers. He seemed to be urging them to keep their cool.

"Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul!"

Cardinal coward, where are you? Cardinal coward, where are you?"

A barrage of tomatoes and eggs went flying. They hit the steps and the police. The crowd kept pushing forward. Some of the barricades fell down. The police pulled back about twenty to thirty feet. You could sense the scene was about to turn very ugly.

"Cardinal coward, where are you? Cardinal coward, where are you? Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul!"

Eggs and tomatoes in all directions. The crowd was almost face-to-face with the police. They pushed the police back to the steps of the Cathedral.

"Cardinal coward, where are you? Cardinal coward, where are you? Let Judas into Heaven! Free Judas' soul!"

A few of the demonstrators began to push an officer. Before anyone realized it, punches began to fly. Police officers were swinging the batons, but the crowd kept on pushing forward.

"Cardinal coward, where are you? Cardinal coward, where are you?"

Eggs and tomatoes were now hitting the doors of the Cathedral. It seemed there was no

stopping now. Suddenly, the main door of the Cathedral opened. The crowd stood still a few moments. The Cardinal was surrounded by six police officers, who were in riot gear. As soon as he appeared on the top step, barrage of eggs and tomatoes went flying in the group's direction. None of the seven was spared.

"Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul! Allow Judas into Heaven! Let Judas join Peter! Let Judas join Peter!"

The Cardinal and the police officers were hit by the eggs and tomatoes. After he kept on hearing the chants of the crowd, the Cardinal just seemed to explode in complete anger at the crowd, and at the whole picture. He began to scream with all his might. "Heretics, go home! Heretics, go home! Heretics, go home! Judas is in Hell! He deserves to be in Hell! He will remain in Hell!"

An egg hit him on the side of his head. It made him scream all the more. "Heretics, there is no hope for Judas! The hearing is a farce! Judas will remain in Hell!"

His face turned beet-red from the anger and the screaming. The more he screamed, the more the crowd chanted, "Free Judas' soul! Free Judas' soul! Let Judas into Heaven! Let Judas into Heaven!"

Tomatoes, eggs all over the place. The Cardinal kept yelling, "Judas is doomed like all of you! You are all doomed! You are all doomed! Judas will be in Hell for eternity!"

The Cardinal clutched at his chest. Down he went. Those were the last words he ever spoke. He was stone cold dead.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have witnessed a most ugly scene. I truly am sorry to see what is happening. I am Michael Sarto for WCS TV, reporting live from outside St. Patrick's Cathedral. Take care."

I motioned to Richard to cut.

believe what I had seen. I felt it was best to have Richard cut and he did."

"Michael, that was yesterday. What is supposed to happen today?"

"I really don't know for sure. I believe Dante will call up a witness and keep up the pressure. There are no doubts Dante wants Judas to remain in Hell."

"Do you think he will succeed?"

"Rose, you are the lawyer, not me. You should give a more appropriate answer to the question."

"Michael, at this point I can't really give you an honest answer. I know one thing. Calvin will fight tooth and nail to win. He showed some of his tenacity while questioning Peter."

The intercom buzzed. Rose answered. She turned to me. "Michael, the limo is waiting downstairs. Finish up." She came over to me and wrapped her arms around me. "Your Majesty, I know you will do a great telecast today."

"G.T., I will keep those words in front of me this entire day." We kissed tenderly and out the door I went.

When I got out of the elevator, I walked into the lobby. Ryan looked as fresh as a daisy. Pete had the door opened and Louis had the limo door opened. After all the good-mornings were exchanged, I entered the limo, followed by Ryan and Louis.

Ryan broke the silence. "Mr. Sarto, did you have a chance to see the morning paper?"

CHAPTER XVII "THE MORNING AFTER"

I woke up next morning and began preparing to go back to the courthouse. I did not have the best of nights. I twisted and turned all night long. The ugly scene kept popping up in my mind all through the night. I did not feel like talking about it. Rose knows that when I get into this weird mental state, the best thing to do is to leave me alone. After I had showered and dressed, Rose inquired if I wanted some breakfast before I left. "Some toast and tea will be enough. My stomach is not in the best of shape this morning."

"I can easily understand why. It is easy for me to say, try putting what happened at the Cathedral behind you. I also know it is very difficult for you to put the scene behind you. However, you are a professional and you cannot allow your personal emotions to overcome your objective reporting. You are paid to report and that is what you must do."

"Rose, you talk like a true lawyer would talk. What you are saying is definitely true, but the anguish I felt when the Cardinal was bombarded by the tomatoes and eggs made me sick to my stomach. When the Cardinal was screaming at the crowd and the crowd kept on the barrage, I saw a no-win situation for the Cardinal. When the Cardinal grabbed his chest and went down, I did not want to

"Ryan, I did not even have a desire to do so. I knew it would be filled with the disaster that happened at the Cathedral."

"Mr. Sarto, one paper devoted the entire paper to the story. Nothing else. The entire demonstration from comments, pictures, and the whole shooting match. The front page had a picture of the Cardinal when he went down. The headline was one word: 'Shame.' The headline described the scene to a 'T.' Whoever thought of the headline should be given a raise. I do not know if you heard about it. The same paper had made remarks about how good your telecast was. It said that you had enough sense to cut instead of prolonging the debacle. You should receive congratulations for what you did."

"Ryan, it is nice to hear. However, I am still sick over what happened yesterday."

"I understand." Louis pulled the limo up to the courthouse. Bos came halfway down the steps to meet us. The crowd behind the barricades were much more subdued this morning. A black cloud seemed to cover the entire surroundings.

"Good morning, Mr. Sarto."

"Good morning, Bos. Take care, Ryan. See you later."

CHAPTER XVIII "HEARING RESUMES"

Bos escorted me to room 1705. As soon as I walked in, I noticed it was packed as usual, but the atmosphere was more quiet than on previous days. Yesterday's tragedy sank into many individuals. It might have taken away some of the circus mood which existed.

Richard was all prepare to roll. "Good morning, Mr. Sarto. Check-in time."

"Morning, Richard. I'll check in as soon as

I get my gear."

I proceeded to set the earphone. "Checking one-two."

"All set, Mr. Sarto. Post time is eight fifty-five. Five minutes for your briefing. Judges will walk in at nine sharp."

"Fine with me. I'll prepare some notes."

I began to write some notes for the intro. I didn't want to harp on the Cardinal's demise. I did make it a point that the tragic end of the Cardinal's life was truly a sorry sight to be viewed on national television.

"Mr. Sarto, two minutes to post time."

"Richard, are you ready? I am on first. While I am speaking, scan the room. Pick out some individuals who seem sorrowful. Keep them on for awhile before you move on."

"Got you."

"Thirty seconds to post time." I adjusted the microphone and straightened out my tie. Looked at the camera. I heard in my ear, "Post time."

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is Michael Sarto of WCS TV. I am reporting to you live from the federal courthouse at Foley Square in New York City. I am sure all of you must have heard or seen what happened to Cardinal Langford by now. It was not a pleasant experience. Not for you and certainly not for me. I am going to do something now which I have not done on a telecast before. I will take a moment of silence, and ask all of you watching this telecast to join me as a final gesture for Cardinal Langford. Thirty seconds of silence please."

Richard's camera was now scanning the courtroom. One could easily surmise that something was amiss. Time was up.

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. In about two minutes the *Judas On Appeal* hearing will resume. A new witness will be called by Advocate Dante. I see the court deputy is approaching the microphone. Let's listen."

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The hearing is now in session. The judges' panel will now enter."

The door opened and Solomon, as usual, headed the procession. He was followed by the other five. They all went to their respective seals and Solomon announced, "The World Court of Religion is now in session. We will continue with

the *Judas On Appeal* hearing. All, please be seated."

Everyone sat.
Solomon addressed Dante. "Advocate Dante, are you ready to call your next witness?"

"Yes, I am."

"Proceed, please."

The court deputy was given a slip by Dante. He walked to the microphone and announced, "High Priest Annas, please come forth."

The door opened and in walked this sallow-faced old man. He was dressed in a scrubby brown tunic and looked as though he had a hump in his back. There was no radiance about him. The spectators almost seemed to look at him with scorn. The court deputy led him to the witness chair.

Dante approached. "Please tell the World Court of Religion your name and position while you were on Planet Earth."

"My name is Annas. I was the retired High Priest of the Sanhedrin at the time."

"You are referring to the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I am."

"Can you please tell the court about the circumstances surrounding the arrest and crucifixion?"

"This individual, Jesus Christ, was going about the land preaching about a number of things. Some of the words were not easily acceptable to a number of people who comprised the population. He spoke of the Kingdom. He made it understood

that He was the messenger who would deliver us from the yoke of the Romans."

"Were you concerned about the Romans?"

"In a way I was. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body as far as religion was concerned. Now this individual, Jesus Christ, was preaching deliverance to us, the Sanhedrin! It was blasphemy. Blasphemy is something which had to be dealt with. After all, we had been waiting for a long time to be delivered."

"Did you have a strong reason to have Jesus Christ arrested and have Him turned over to the Romans for execution?"

"The Sanhedrin believed they had a strong reason. As I said earlier, blasphemy is a serious matter. It must be dealt with swiftly and with severity."

"What was the method to be used to handle the problem?"

"It was decided to arrest Jesus Christ. It was also decided to arrest Him at an acceptable time."

"What time was that?"

"The best time to arrest Him was when there was not a large crowd of people around Him. The Sanhedrin did not want to cause a riot scene."

"Were you able to do it, and how?"

"An individual approached the Sanhedrin at a meeting. He informed us that he would be able to deliver Jesus Christ to us at an opportune time."

"What was your response to the individual?"

"We would be happy for your help."

"Did you promise him anything for his help?"

"Yes, we promised him a reward."

"Did you specify the reward?"

"No."

"Can you identify the individual in this courtroom?"

"Yes, I can. The individual is the one sitting at that table, Judas Iscariot."

The spectators winced when Annas proclaimed the individual.

"No further questions."

Advocate Dante headed to his seat and had an expression of a job well done.

Solomon turned to Calvin. "Advocate Calvin, do you wish to question the witness?"

"I certainly do. I certainly do."

Calvin had a look in his eyes, which meant he was ready for a full-scale attack.

"You are Annas, retired High Priest of the Sanhedrin?"

"I am."

"Did you do all the duties of the High Priest or did you have someone help you discharge the duties?"

"Yes, I had help."

"Who was the one who aided you?"

"It was my son-in-law, Caiaphas."

"Was he also a High Priest?"

"Actually he was. I was getting old and the Sanhedrin named him a High Priest. We shared the work."

"You testified about arresting Jesus Christ at a time that would not cause a disturbance. Is that correct?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you decide how that was to be accomplished?"

"Up to that point no decision was made. However, when Judas Iscariot approached us, a solution appeared."

"Would you say that you needed Judas Iscariot to complete your actions?"

"Yes, we needed Judas Iscariot or anyone else of that ilk."

"You did say you promised Judas Iscariot a reward?"

"Yes."

"You did say you did not reveal the reward?"

"Yes."

"After all was completed, the arrest of Jesus Christ, did you give the reward to Judas Iscariot?"

"Yes, I did."

"Tell the court, what was the reward that you gave Judas Iscariot for delivering to you Jesus Christ?"

"I gave him thirty pieces of silver as a reward."

Grumblings were heard throughout the courtroom.

"Did you give any thought, at any time, how was it that Judas Iscariot appeared out of the blue, to help you complete your plan?"

"No, it never entered my mind."

"What happened after you gave the thirty pieces of silver to Judas Iscariot?"

"He was filled with anger when he realized the size of the reward."

"Did he do or say anything?"

"Yes, he did. At first he left. Later, he returned and was quite beside himself. He apparently discovered that Jesus was condemned. He said that he had betrayed innocent blood. We replied something to the effect that it was not our problem. It was his problem. He took the thirty pieces of silver and flung it onto the floor. He rushed out the door. Later, we were notified he had hanged himself."

"Do you think he hanged himself because he was full of sorrow?"

"I cannot answer your question. I really don't know why he did what he did. I only know his betrayal of Jesus Christ was an important factor leading to the arrest and subsequent crucifixion of Jesus Christ."

"Why did you not accept Jesus Christ as the messenger?"

"I did not believe He was Kosher."

"No further questions."

The spectators seemed to be astounded with the matter-of-fact testimony of Annas.

"The *Judas On Appeal* hearing will recess until this afternoon," Solomon informed all. The judges all rose from their seats and filed out.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have just heard some very interesting testimony from the High Priest Annas. After the station break I will attempt to question the analyst panel about the testimony. Stay tuned."

CHAPTER
XIX
"ANALYST PANEL"

"Analyst panel, please come in. This is Michael Sarto of WCS TV."

"Mr. Sarto, this is Aristotle. How may I help you?"

"Sir, I would like to ask the panel a few questions, if you please?"

"No problem. Would you wish to speak to anyone in particular?"

"No. However, I can start with you, if you don't mind?"

"Please proceed."

"Generally speaking, what did you think of the tone of the Arnas testimony?"

"The way I saw it, both advocates scored points for their positions. Each advocate wanted to establish Judas' role in relation to the Sanhedrin and the betrayal. As mentioned before, I believe both did."

"Sir Thomas More, do you feel Advocate Dante was able to show Judas Iscariot's approach to the Sanhedrin was an act of free will?"

"It certainly brought out a particular act of free will. When Judas Iscariot did in fact approach the Sanhedrin he was acting with free will."

"Martin Luther, do you agree or disagree with Sir Thomas More's interpretation?"

**CHAPTER
XX**

"CAIAPHAS IS CALLED—PLUS A SHOCK"

"I certainly disagree with his interpretation. Yes, Judas did approach the Sanhedrin. Yes, he did say to them he would be able to deliver Jesus Christ at an opportune time. However, as Advocate Calvin brought out when he questioned Annas, how strange it was for Judas Iscariot to come out of the blue and offer his assistance. Since Judas Iscariot was placed on Planet Earth to do what he did, he was expected to approach the Sanhedrin. His act was to approach the Sanhedrin and he fulfilled the prophecy of the Scriptures. Do I make myself clear how I view the testimony of Annas?"

"You certainly do. I wish to thank the analyst panel for their comments and I will speak to you again."

I just felt I was going to get myself into a pot of boiling oil, so it was best to cut it short.

Richard had me back on camera.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have now received the opinions of the analyst panel. It seems the three of them are having different opinions in reference to the Annas testimony. I am sure you who are watching are formulating your own conclusions. Whatever you do, please do not become violent if your opinions differ from your friends or relatives. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions. Take care. I'll be back on when the hearing resumes this afternoon. This is Michael Sarto of WCS TV."

Bos escorted Richard and myself back to 1705 after lunch. We resumed our usual positions and waited for the hearing to begin. I placed on my gear and checked in.

"Post time is two o'clock. Get Richard ready."

"Fine. Richard, are you set?"

"Sure am."

"Thirty seconds. Go on."

"Ladies and gentlemen, Michael Sarto of WCS TV welcoming you back to the *Judas On Appeal* hearing. As you probably know, the hearing is being held in the federal courthouse at Foley Square in New York City. The court deputy is approaching the microphone."

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The World Court of Religion is now in session."

The door opened and Solomon headed the parade of judges. Each one took his position. Solomon proclaimed, "All please sit. Advocate Dante, please proceed to call your witness."

The court deputy was given a slip by Dante and he called out, "Caiaphas, the High Priest, please come forth."

The side door opened and out walked a middle-aged man. He was wearing a black

vestment and it could have been an outfit he wore while performing his duties as a High Priest. He was led to the witness stand and he sat.

Dame came to him and stated, "Please give your name and position to the court."

"My name is Caiaphas. I am a High Priest of the Sanhedrin."

"Are you related to the High Priest Annas?"

"Yes, I am his son-in-law."

"Was your father-in-law instrumental in having you become a High Priest?"

"It was a good possibility. Annas was getting on in years. The work was becoming too burdensome. It was then decided for me to help lessen the load."

"Were you present when the Sanhedrin decided to arrest Jesus Christ?"

"I certainly was."

"Did you vote to arrest Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I did."

"Why did you vote to arrest Jesus Christ?"

Did He commit a crime of some sort?"

"He had committed the crime of blasphemy. He was proclaiming he was the Son of God and some said he was King of the Jews."

"Did you or anyone else of the Sanhedrin hear those statements directly?"

"I cannot answer for others but I can only answer for myself. I never heard those statements myself."

"Well, how did you know for sure that Jesus Christ made those statements?"

"I received the information from reliable sources."

"Could those informants have been wrong?"

"Yes, they could have been. However, as I have said, they were reliable."

"Annas testified that Judas Iscariot approached the Sanhedrin and offered his assistance to arrest Jesus Christ. Was his testimony correct?"

"Yes, it was."

"Did you or anyone else from the Sanhedrin approach Judas Iscariot and make him an offer of some kind to induce him to betray Jesus Christ?"

"No, I did not and as far as I know, none of the Sanhedrin had approached Judas Iscariot with any offer."

"Were you surprised when Judas came to the Sanhedrin and offered his services?"

"Yes, I was surprised. So too were the other members of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was delving into the problem of Jesus Christ's arrest. We did not want to arrest him and cause a riot of some kind."

"Would you say that Judas Iscariot came to the Sanhedrin of his own free will?"

"I certainly would say Judas Iscariot came to the Sanhedrin and offered his service by his own free will."

"No further questions."

Judas took a deep breath when he heard those last words. He knew Caiaphas' testimony hurt him.

Solomon called out, "Advocate Calvin, please question the witness, if you wish." Calvin had fire in his eyes as he approached the witness.

"High Priest Caiaphas, you did receive the position of High Priest because of your father-in-law, Annas. Is that true?"

"I suppose it is true."

"Since you did receive the position because of the influence of Annas, would you say you were beholden to him?"

"In a way, I was."

"Your father-in-law did not like Jesus Christ. Is it true?"

"Yes, it's true."

"Did he not like Jesus Christ because He was some sort of a threat to him?"

"Yes. Jesus Christ was a threat. Not only to Annas but to all Jews."

"Why is that?"

"Jesus Christ was preaching doctrines which were contrary to our beliefs. Since we were under the yoke of the Romans, we feared reprisals. It was something that was not wanted. I'm speaking of Roman reprisals."

"You just testified of informants giving you information of Jesus Christ's statements. True?"

"Yes."

"Annas felt threatened that he was possibly losing power. He needed your help when the vote to arrest Jesus Christ came up. True?"

"Yes, it is true."

"You voted to arrest Jesus Christ because of pressure directly or indirectly from Annas. True?"

"Yes, it is true."

"When Judas Iscariot approached the Sanhedrin and offered his services, did you or Annas question him?"

"Both of us did question him."

"Who was the main inquisitor?"

"It was Annas."

"Did you think it was strange when Judas Iscariot came to the Sanhedrin and offered his services?"

"I thought it was very strange."

"Earlier you testified that Judas came of his own free will."

"Yes, I did."

"Neither you nor any of the Sanhedrin had approached Judas Iscariot? True?"

"Very true."

"Could it be that Judas Iscariot came to offer his services to betray Jesus Christ, not by free will, but because he was placed on Planet Earth to carry out the prophecy of the Scripture?"

"Yes. It could be a possibility."

"No further questions."

Judas' face appeared to have been given new life. The spectators on the Judas side began to clap. Solomon began to bang the gavel asking for silence.

I heard a scream on the Judas side. Richard shot the camera over to Judas' table. A newspaper man, Mark Langley of the *International Christian News*, an extreme right-wing paper, leaped over the

CHAPTER
XXI

"PONTIUS PILATE"

barrier. He had a dagger in his hand. He was plunging the dagger into the chest of Judas. With every plunge he was screaming, "Go to Hell! You belong in Hell!"

The courtroom exploded with screams. No blood was coming out of Judas. Judas was actually laughing as Langley was plunging the knife into his chest. Marshals jumped on Langley. They were pulling him out of the courtroom. Solomon was continuing the banging of the gavel and entreating for order.

"This session is recessed." Out of the courtroom the judges followed Solomon. I really did not believe what I just witnessed.

"Ladies and gentlemen. You can easily see what is happening because of this hearing. A newsman was actually trying to plunge a dagger into an individual who was resurrected from the dead. Truthfully, it is now time to sign off. Take care."

I motioned to Richard to cut, and walked out of 1705, quite shaken up.

I arrived at the courthouse about ten minutes before nine. The morning traffic was horrendous. I thought of walking to the courthouse a few times. Ryan suggested it was wise to wait it out. Bos spotted the limo and came right down the steps as soon as we pulled up. I called out, "See you later, Ryan."

"Good telecast, Mr. Sarto. I'll be waiting."

Bos had an elevator waiting. He knew I had to rush up to 1705. I was in the booth five minutes to nine. I put on the gear and nodded to Richard.

"Checking one, two."

"Loud and clear, Mr. Sarto. Post time is nine sharp. You can go on right now if you wish."

"Just keep it open. I'll go on a minute or two before the court deputy heads to the microphone."

"You got it."

I was thinking about the Langley incident and I was still shocked over what had happened. It was not decided at that moment if I should open the telecast with yesterday's episode. The court deputy got off his seat.

"Let's go, Richard." He turned the camera on me. "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV, reporting live from the federal courthouse at Foley Square in New York

City. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing will commence in a few moments."

The court deputy reached the microphone. "Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session."

The door opened and Solomon and the other five judges filed out, and took their respective seats. There seemed to be a suspect look in the judges' faces. I knew something was not right. As soon as Solomon took his seat he opened, "Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated."

All sat. The spectators had a nervous look about them.

"I wish to inform everyone in this courtroom of the following procedures. The first row of seats behind the two advocates will be occupied by federal marshals. Also, if there happens to be one more demonstration of any kind, such as that which occurred at yesterday's session, we, the judges, will ban all of the public from this hearing. The judges will not tolerate any spectacle whatsoever. I hope all understand the solemn nature of this hearing."

All spectators just put their heads down like little school kids who were being reprimanded. "Advocate Dante, are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, I am."

"Please do so."

Advocate Dante handed slip a paper to the court deputy. He read it and announced, "Pontius Pilate, come forth."

The door opened and there appeared a man of regal appearance. He was dressed in a purple robe trimmed with gold stitching. His white hair glittered in the light. He followed the court deputy to the stand and sat. For a moment, Dante looked apprehensive as he approached Pontius Pilate.

"Please state your name and position to the court."

"My name is Pontius Pilate. I am the Procurator of Rome."

"Were you the Procurator at the time of the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes."

"Will you tell the court the first time you saw Jesus Christ?"

"The first time I saw Jesus Christ was when he was brought to my courtyard by those who were associated with the High Priests and the Sanhedrin."

"When Jesus Christ was brought to you, were you bewildered?"

"Yes, to a certain extent."

"What did you say?"

"I asked what was this man accused of? Those who had delivered him to me were dismayed. Their answer was something to the effect if he wasn't a criminal, they would not have brought him to me."

"What did that reply mean to you?"

"I grew impatient with them. I told them to judge him by their own laws. They then showed what they really wanted."

"What was that?"

"They answered, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.'"

"What were the charges against Jesus Christ which called for the death penalty?"

"They called out minor offenses. Amongst the charges were the payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ, a King."

"Did you believe any of the accusations?"

"Truthfully, I did not. I decided to use a different tactic."

"What did you do?"

"I returned to my apartment. I instructed my men to deliver Jesus Christ to my quarters. They did so."

"Did you question Him?"

"Yes. I asked him, 'Are you King of the Jews?'"

"What was His answer?"

"He answered, 'Thou sayest it.' He also added, 'Do you say this, or have others told you of Me?'"

"What did you reply to His question?"

"I protested and said I did not pay attention to the religious fanatics. I was not a Jew. I told him, 'It was the Jewish fanatics who brought you to me. What have you done?'"

"What was His reply?"

"He gave me a reply as if he were King. 'My kingdom is not on Planet Earth.' When he answered me with that statement, I felt I was dealing with a different type of religious fanatic."

While Pilate was answering Dante's questions, Richard would switch back and forth to the spectators. From their facial expressions, it could easily be seen they had a look of hypnosis. They hung on every word which was uttered by Pilate and Dante.

"What was your next move?"

"He made me feel uneasy. I knew he had not committed a criminal act. I went out and told the crowd words to the effect that Jesus Christ was not guilty."

"Did they accept your statements?"

"No, they did not. They ranted and raved. I heard that Jesus Christ was from Galilee, and then decided to send Jesus Christ to the Jewish King Herod. My thought was it would take this case out of my jurisdiction."

"Did the sending of Jesus Christ to Herod solve the problem?"

"No. Herod did not do a bit of good for me. Jesus Christ was sent back to me. At this point I realized I had an explosive situation on my hands. The rabble were being fired up by the High Priests, and they were calling for the execution of an innocent man."

"Did you attempt to appease them?"

"Yes. It was a custom on Passover to free a prisoner. I sought out an individual by the name of Barabbas. He had committed a murder during a riot. I asked them to select for freedom, Jesus or Barabbas. They chose the murderer and I was

perplexed. Then I asked what should I do with Jesus Christ."

"What was their answer?"

"Away with him! Crucify him!"

"How could you order an innocent man to be put to death?"

"I did not. I tried to evade the issue. I told them that I would have Jesus Christ scourged. After seeing a man scourged, the crowd would usually relent. Under the law, an individual could only receive thirty-nine lashes. Usually a victim barely survives the ordeal. Jesus Christ was whipped with thirty-nine separate lashes. It was most agonizing seeing him suffer this tribulation."

"Was the mob satisfied?"

"No. They kept on yelling for an execution. I pleaded with them concerning Jesus Christ's innocence. They would not hear of it. They wanted blood."

"What was your retort?"

"If it is blood you want, then you will have it. However, I wash my hands of this foul deed.' I proceeded to wash my hands and turned him over to the Roman soldiers. They would carry out the execution."

"No further questions."

Gloom had taken over the courtroom. Solomon proclaimed, "This hearing is recessed. It will resume this afternoon."

Enough said, I signed off.

CHAPTER XXII "PONTIUS PILATE—PART II"

The morning session had been completed. My stomach was not feeling right. I wanted to sit in the booth and try to get myself back on the right track. "Please, Richard, bring back a container of hot tea and some fruit when you finish lunch."

"Are you sure you don't want to join us?"

"No, I'm fine. I just want to be by myself for awhile."

"Whatever you say. I'll be back in a little while."

Richard hooked up with Bos and off they went. While walking out of the courtroom, Bos looked back at me. It seemed as though he was checking me out.

I kept on running through my mind the morning testimony of Pilate. A number of times I actually could feel my presence on the scene. The whipping of Jesus Christ had to make some of the mob sick to their stomachs. It makes you realize that there are evil individuals in every generation. Seeing an individual flogged thirty-nine times, and still yell for blood, is beyond the wildest imagination! It must come from a mind that is totally bankrupt!

A number of spectators remained in the courtroom. It was probably out of concern for fear of losing their seats. They must have felt like I did,

knowing Calvin was going to go after Pontius Pilate with all his might. They did not want to miss the potential shootout between Calvin and Pontius Pilate. Richard returned from lunch and brought the tea, an orange, and a pear.

"Mr. Sarto, are you OK?"

"I'm fine. I'll sip the tea, eat the fruit and be ready to go when the hearing resumes."

The spectators began to file in. Before you know it, the room was packed. The analyst panel and the two advocates arrived and took their seats. Judas was extremely close behind Calvin. As soon as everyone was in place, the court deputy approached the microphone. I went on. "Ladies and gentlemen, the afternoon session is about to begin."

The court deputy spoke. "Please, all rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session." As he spoke, the door opened and the judges filed in. Solomon, as usual, headed the parade. They all took their seats. Solomon began, "Please be seated. Advocate Calvin, do you wish to question Pontius Pilate?"

"Yes, I do."

Solomon instructed the court deputy to call Pontius Pilate. The court deputy announced, "Pontius Pilate, come forth."

In walked Pilate and followed the court deputy to the witness stand. Calvin came to the witness stand. I noticed that Calvin seemed to have a look of anger, and at the same time a look of disgust, when he came close to Pilate.

"Pontius Pilate. Were you the Procurator of Rome at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I was."

"Were you the one who had the power to decide if an individual was guilty or innocent of a criminal act?"

"Yes, I was."

"Were you the sole individual who had that power in the territory?"

"Yes, I was. In the particular territory, I had the sole power to decide."

"This morning you testified that Jesus Christ was brought to you by a mob of religious fanatics. True?"

"Yes."

"Did you also testify that the charges against Jesus Christ were not of a criminal nature?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you also testify of the innocence of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I did."

"Pontius Pilate, I find it very difficult to understand. Was Jesus Christ brought to you by a mob of religious fanatics?"

"Yes."

"Was He accused of minor infractions, which were not of a criminal nature?"

"Yes, he was."

"Did you believe He was innocent, as you just testified?"

"Yes, it was my belief."

"Did you order the whipping of Jesus Christ?" Calvin's voice jumped up a number of decibels.

"Yes."

"Pontius Pilate, tell the court how you were able to issue the edict to have Jesus Christ punished, when you knew everything that just came from your lips?"

"I find it very difficult to tell the court."

Solomon jumped in. "Pontius Pilate, you are instructed to testify anything and everything about this matter. Answer what you have been asked by Advocate Calvin."

A buzz seemed to go through the courtroom. Some sudden electrical current ripped through the spectators. Pilate had an uneasy look about him, as he was twisting and turning in his seat. He seemed to try to pull himself together before responding to Calvin's demand. Finally, he spoke, "Yes, I know the mob was comprised of religious fanatics. They were being agitated by those despicable Jewish High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas. We Romans felt these Jews belonged with the snakes that crawl on the Planet Earth."

The last sentence of Pilate brought gasps from the spectators. Richard's camera was scanning the courtroom. Some had a look of disbelief of what they had just heard. Pilate seemed to look a little more settled.

He continued, "Yes, Jesus Christ was accused of minor offenses. The offenses were not criminal. I did not want a riot on my hands. If a

riot developed, it would not look good for me in Rome. I hoped to appease this bunch of snakes by ordering the whipping. It was not a case of just appeasing the snakes. It was a case of quelling a possible riot, which I did not want Rome to know about. The whipping was completed. Jesus Christ was a broken man at this point."

"After the whipping, did the mob want other action?"

"Yes, the Jewish snakes wanted the blood of Jesus Christ."

"Did you give them what they wanted?"

"Yes, I did. I told them that Jesus Christ was innocent of the charges. It was to no avail. I would wash my hands of this matter. A servant brought me water in a bowl and a towel. I washed my hands and dried them. I told the Jewish snakes that the blood of this innocent man would be on their hands. It would not be on mine."

"What did you do next?"

"I ordered the Roman centurion to have Jesus Christ crucified."

"At that moment was the mob satisfied?"

"I believe they were."

"Do you feel that you shirked your responsibility by ordering the death of an innocent Man?"

"Yes and no."

"Will you explain the answer?"

"Yes, in my mind and heart I felt Jesus Christ was innocent. Yes, I ordered his execution. I feel terrible about the order of execution now. But

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"ANALYSTS ON PONTIUS PILATE"**

please remember that Jesus Christ was a Jew. He was not a Roman. If he were Roman, I could never have him executed on the charges which were made. Since he was a Jew, it made not a bit of difference to Rome. One less Jew did not mean the end of the world."

"Looking back at the picture, do you feel you played an important part?"

"Yes, I do. I feel I was one of the main characters chosen to do what I did, when I did it."

"No further questions."

Silence and shock gripped the entire courtroom. It was almost impossible to believe the testimony of Pontius Pilate.

Solomon banged his gavel. "The *Judas On Appeal* Hearing is recessed. It will resume at nine tomorrow morning."

All rose as the judges headed out the door.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have just heard some flaming testimony by Pontius Pilate. I'm sure you will want to hear what the analyst panel has to say about his testimony. I will be right back after a station break. Stay tuned."

The station break was over and I immediately called over to the analyst panel.

"Gentlemen, this is Michael Sarto. Do you hear me?"

"We certainly do. How may we help you?"

"I would like to ask you some questions regarding the testimony of Pontius Pilate. Aristotle, is that agreeable with you?"

"If you do not mind, I prefer to relinquish answering any questions at this point. I feel the testimony of Pontius Pilate was very complex. I did not digest all the inferences as yet. As a result, I believe my associates would be more useful to you."

"Very well. Martin Luther, did you find Pontius Pilate's testimony to be intriguing?"

"Yes, I did. He was able to tell his side of the story. It was plain to see the difficult position that he was in. He knew and demonstrated his concern for the innocent Man who was before him. He also knew he had to make a most difficult decision. He didn't want a potential riot to erupt. He did not want a bad report to get back to Rome. He tried to appease the anger of the rabble by having Jesus Christ scourged. However, at the same time, he did not want to show he was weak. He finally realized there was only one route to take,

and that was the ordering of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ."

"Thank you very much for your comments.
Sir Thomas More, if you please, may I hear your comments?"

"Yes. I find both of the advocates did excellent work bringing out the positions for their representations. Advocate Dante scored some key points for Christianity. Advocate Calvin scored some major points for his client."

"Do you feel that Advocate Calvin is sort of spinning a web to show a pattern of *predestination*?"

"Without a doubt. Please notice how he finishes up with all of the witnesses. He makes each one announce his part which he played in the entire scenario. Yes, each one is an important part of the entire puzzle."

"Thank you for your comment, and hopefully we will speak again. Ladies and gentlemen, you have just heard the comments of two analysts, Martin Luther and Sir Thomas More. They feel the testimony of Pontius Pilate will have a dramatic effect on the decision of this hearing. One thing I do find strange in reference to their comments. Neither one mentioned the apparent bigotry of Pontius Pilate against the Jews. Perhaps it was a different world at the time. It was not important then as it is now. It is time to sign off now. Take care. I'll be back tomorrow morning when the *Judas On Appeal* hearing continues."

I motioned to Richard to cut.

CHAPTER XXIV "THE CENTURION"

I arrived at the courthouse at about eight forty-five. The trip down was not as exacting as on previous mornings. Ryan and Louis were in the mood for conversation, while I was subdued and pensive. Seeing the atmosphere, both of them left well enough alone. In a way, the hearing was starting to crawl under my skin and it was starting to make me a little upset, hearing the actual words of those who performed the deeds of this extremely foul undertaking. No matter how neutral I tried to be, it was beginning to be impossible to maintain the position. Bos escorted me right up to 1705. Just a small greeting passed between us. He sort of surmised my feelings and was smart enough to back off. Richard greeted me and informed me the live telecast would be at eight fifty-five. No problem there. I put on my gear and checked in.

"Testing one, two."
"Loud and clear, Mr. Sarto. Post time in three minutes."

"Thanks. I'll be ready."
I wrote some notes and informed Richard of the usual opening minutes or so, and then switch to the court deputy. He just nodded. He worked enough times with me to know my pattern.

"Thirty seconds."
I gave the high sign to Richard.
"Post time."

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV reporting to you live from the federal courthouse at Foley Square, New York City. In a few minutes, once again will begin the hearing of *Judas On Appeal*. The words of the witnesses have made a dramatic effect on practically all who have followed this hearing. There have been reports of arguments which have led to physical encounters. I ask you to please try to maintain a degree of patience and understanding. Let your friends or relations have the opportunity to express their feelings and emotions. The court deputy is going to begin the proceedings. Let's listen."

"The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session. All rise." Everyone rose and out from the doorway, the six judges filed in. The same every day, Solomon headed the parade.

After all sat, Solomon asked, "Are the two advocates ready to proceed?"

The two of them answered, "Yes."
"Let us proceed. Advocate Dante, please call your witness."

Dante wrote a name on a paper and handed it to the court deputy. The court deputy announced, "Centurion, come forth."

The door opened and standing there was an exceptionally handsome individual. He was dressed in the uniform of a centurion, who would be parading before Caesar. Every slitch of his garment sparkled. He followed the court deputy to the witness chair and sat.

Dante came to him and asked, "What was your position during the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?"

"I was the captain in charge."

"You are a centurion, are you not?"

"Yes, I am."

"Who issued the order to you to crucify Jesus Christ?"

"It was the Procurator, Pontius Pilate."

"While Jesus Christ was being questioned by Pontius Pilate, did you have any opinions whether he was guilty or innocent of the charge?"

"No, at the time of the questioning I did not have any opinion."

"Were you surprised when Pontius Pilate ordered you to carry out the crucifixion?"

"Not really. I could see the crowd were clamoring for his death. The crowd were being pushed by the High Priests. It seemed to me that the Procurator did not really want to execute him. Finally in disgust, he recanted."

"No further questions."

"Advocate Calvin, your witness."

"Centurion, you mentioned you were ordered by Pontius Pilate to put Jesus Christ to death. Is that correct?"

"Yes."

"Were you present when Jesus Christ was scourged?"

"Yes, I was."

"Did you see a broken individual before you after the scourging?"

"Yes, I did."

"Were you present when the crowd wanted blood after the scourging?"

"I said yes to Advocate Dante's question."

"Will you tell the court what the procedure would be to put Jesus Christ to death?"

"He would be made to carry the wooden cross to Golgotha. There he would be nailed to the cross, and all would wait until he expired."

A chill seemed to cover the entire courtroom as those last words were spoken.

"Did anything happen on the way to Golgotha?"

"Yes, there was an occurrence."

"Please tell the court."

"I noticed that Jesus Christ was very weak as a result to the scourging. I commanded one of the soldiers to take an individual from the crowd. The individual would carry the cross to the place of crucifixion. By doing so, it prevented Jesus Christ from dying before he arrived at Golgotha."

"What happened after you arrived at Golgotha?"

"Jesus Christ was stripped of his garments and he was nailed to the cross."

Spectators, including myself, cringed at the words, "nailed to the cross."

The centurion continued, "The cross was pulled into a hole and it was standing in an upright position. The two thieves, who also were being executed, were flanked on each side of Jesus Christ."

"Did Jesus Christ say anything?"

"Yes, he did. First he said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.'"

"Were you surprised at what you heard?"

"Yes, I was totally surprised."

"Was anything else spoken?"

"Yes, one of the thieves, Dismas, asked Jesus Christ to remember him in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Did Jesus Christ respond to Dismas?"

"Yes, he answered, 'This day you will be with me in Paradise.'"

The spectators were moving in their seats in a most uncomfortable position.

Advocate Calvin asked, "Did Jesus Christ say anything else?"

"Yes, near the end of his ordeal he said, 'I thirst.' One of the soldiers put a twig dipped in wine to his lips. He tasted it."

"What was the crowd doing while Jesus Christ was dying on the cross?"

"They kept on tormenting him. They kept on yelling if he was the true Christ, he would come down from the cross and save himself. There was no let-up. The soldiers also were using dice to see who would win his clothing."

"Was anything else spoken by Jesus Christ before He expired?"

"Yes, he turned his face up to the Heavens and exclaimed, in Aramaic, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani.' Translated literally, it means 'My God

My God, why has thou forsaken me? Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

"Then what happened?"

"He just expired. The moment he expired I thought the end of the world was at hand. Everything became pitch black. Thunder and lightning enveloped the sky. I understand the temple curtain was torn apart. I realized what I had witnessed and done was a most tragic error on my part. I had put the Son of God to death. I fell onto my knees and yelled out with all I could muster, 'Truly, He was the Son of God.'"

All in the courtroom were shaken by the centurion's very vivid description of the crucifixion.

"After Jesus Christ had expired, did you have anything else to do with this matter?"

"Yes, I did. Later in the day I was called by Pontius Pilate. He wanted me to verify that Jesus Christ was truly dead. A member of the Sanhedrin, named Joseph, wanted the body so that he could place it in a grave. I informed the Procurator of Jesus Christ's death. The body was released to Joseph."

"Looking back at the crucifixion, did you feel your actions were necessary for Jesus Christ to complete the redemption of mankind from original sin?"

"There is no doubt in my mind. I was a very integral participant."

"No further questions."

A sigh of relief came forth from the spectators. Solomon began to bang the gavel. "The

morning session is in recess. The hearing will resume this afternoon."

The judges all rose from their seats and filed out.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I think you must agree that the testimony of the centurion was most chilling. He was next to the cross and to Jesus Christ. It was a most horrifying description. It made me feel unsettled. I am sure a large number of you feel the same way at this moment. That's it for now. I'll be back this afternoon when *Judas On Appeal* resumes. Take care."

Richard cut.

**CHAPTER
XXV
“SURPRISE”**

As soon as the morning session was over, I was on my way to have some lunch with Bos. Richard informed me he had an errand to take care of. He assured me of his being back on time, when the hearing was to resume.

While Bos and I were walking to the cafeteria, I noticed he seemed to be wanting to say something.

“Come on, Bos, if you have something to say, get it out.”

“Mr. Sarto, please try to understand. I’d love to tell you what I know. However, all the marshals were sworn to secrecy.”

My ears went up like sky-high antennas. I could not contain myself. “If you can’t tell me, I understand. However, I thought you were my buddy.”

“Man, you are playing games with me. You know I want to tell you what I know. The hell with it. A secret witness has been brought in to testify this afternoon. I’m telling you the truth. I don’t know who it is. Could be a man or could be a woman. I don’t know. The witness came in through the back entrance. They told me it was covered up from top to bottom. Two marshals guided the witness to a special room. They are

standing guard right now, outside the room. No one, and I mean no one, is allowed into that room.”

“Are you pulling my leg? I’m finding it very hard to believe or understand what you just said.”

“I’m not pulling your leg. I just told you what I know. I can’t force you to believe me. It’s the truth, man.”

“OK, OK, I believe you. Who in the world could this witness be? Wait a minute! Now I remember something. When I was given the list of the potential witnesses, it was mentioned there would be a possibility of some secret witnesses. There weren’t any names. I’m sure this witness is one of them.”

“See. I told you I wasn’t giving you a story.”

“Fine. Let’s grab a bite and get back. I don’t want to be late for this entrance.”

We had a quick lunch and went back to 1705. Richard was already back. I hinted to Richard that this session was going to be something special. He kept pestering me to tell him. No way was I going to kill this surprise. I looked at my watch and it was almost one o’clock. I put on my gear and tested, “One, two.”

“All clear, Mr. Sarto. Post time in two minutes.”

“Buddy, you better be ready. There will be a monster surprise this afternoon.”

“What’s that?”

“You heard me. Something really special.
 Make sure you’re on the ball.”
 “You know I’m on the ball!”
 “Keep it that way.”
 “Post time.”

**CHAPTER
 XXVI
*“SECRET WITNESS”***

The court deputy got to the microphone.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Please rise. The afternoon session will now begin.” The door opened and the judges paraded to their assigned positions. I was getting a little anxious. “Ladies and gentlemen, please listen. Drop everything that you are doing. Pay attention to your television sets or your radios. I don’t know for sure, but I know this hearing is in for a major surprise. Let’s listen.”

Solomon announced, “Advocate Dante, please call your witness.”

The court deputy picked up the paper from Dante, and headed to the microphone. “Secret witness, please come forth.”

The door opened and I couldn’t believe what my eyes were seeing. The witness was dressed in a designer black tuxedo. Also, he was wearing a bright red bow tie, a bright red cummerbund and highly polished black patent leather shoes. He was also carrying a walking cane. He was close to six feet in height, slick black hair, and sort of on the slim side. His features were sharp, and he was sporting a thin mustache and a van Dyke-styled beard. His eyes were deeply penetrating. I could not honestly say what color they were. Truthfully, it was the weirdest set of eyes that I had ever seen.

Believe me, I have seen plenty of eyes in my lifetime.

I could not possibly describe the look on the faces of the spectators. Richard was going back and forth with his camera. First he focused on the witness, then the spectators. Some of the spectators were nudging each other as if to say, "Who is he?" I did not know for sure who he was either. He walked behind the court deputy with a most jaunty step. He was smiling. You would think he was going to some sort of a ball at the Waldorf Astoria. He sat in the witness stand and Dante approached.

"Will you please tell the court your name?"

"Gladly. My name is Lucifer, also known as Satan."

The entire group in 1705 gasped. In a way, some of the spectators appeared to be petrified with fear. Before their very eyes was the one individual that they had dreaded. I'm sure they did not want to confront him in any way.

"At present, where do you reside?"

"I reside anywhere and anyplace I please. However, my main habitat is Hell."

I took a big swallow and so did others.

"Is there anyplace which you cannot go?"

"Yes, there is."

"Will you tell the court where you cannot go?"

"That damn place is Heaven."

Solomon jumped in. "Lucifer, please curtail your remarks. It was agreed by all parties to be most respectful."

"I'm sorry. I did agree to those terms." "I accept your apology. Advocate Dante, please continue."

Dante was back at him. "Is it true at one time you also resided in Heaven?" "Yes, it is true."

"Why is it you are not residing in Heaven at the present time?"

"I had a disagreement with the Main Man. "Are you referring to God Almighty as the Main Man?"

"That's the one."

"Were you asked to leave Heaven in a peaceful manner or were you forced out?"

"I was forced out."

"Who carried out your exit?"

"Michael, the Archangel, was the Main Man's hatchet man."

I did not believe what I was hearing. In a way, it sounded as if he was joking with Dante. Underneath, he was dead serious.

"Since your exit from Heaven, how do you occupy yourself?"

"I do various things. My main occupation is to tempt souls. If I succeed, I get one more to join me in Hell."

It looked as though Lucifer was bragging.

"Will you name a few of your successes?"

"I can name a whole score if you want me to. If I did, we would be sitting here for a few months."

"I really acknowledge your expertise. However, a few names will suffice. Please name them."

"To start off, one of my best was Eve. You know, Adam's wife. She was a real cinch. She was greedy. With a little coaxing here and a little coaxing there, she did the trick. She got Adam to eat the apple. In one swoop I had two for the price of one."

Some laughter erupted from the spectators. Solomon banged on the gavel. "Silence or I'll have the courtroom cleared."

"Will you name a few more?"

"Yes, I made a major victory when the Main Man destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. There came a whole slew with one shot."

"Will you name some others?"

"Sure, remember Pharaoh, the one who kept the Jews in bondage in Egypt? He's with me. All those Egyptian soldiers who were chasing Moses, and drowned in the Red Sea, they are all with me."

Now his testimony was starting to have a frosting effect as he kept reciting names off.

"Will you name some who are with you, who were on Planet Earth during the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?"

"No problem. Starting off, I have Annas and Caiaphas, the High Priests of the Sanhedrin. They were a sure bet to be in my residence."

"Any others?"

"Pontius Pilate was more than welcome. The Roman soldiers who played dice for Jesus

Christ's clothes. They are with me. Some of those who were yelling to crucify Jesus Christ, they are with me."

"Now, can you name one soul who is in this courtroom that is with you?"

"Easy, Judas Iscariot."

I took a deep puff of oxygen. So did many other spectators.

"Are you sure?"

"Not only am I sure, but he is one of my finest accomplishments."

"Will you explain your statement?"

"He was not an easy case. Remember, he was following Jesus Christ all over the land. So he could have swung either way. He had a couple of faults. One, he liked money. Sometimes he would become disillusioned about kingdoms. Jesus Christ was referring to the Kingdom of Heaven. Judas Iscariot thought the Kingdom would be on Planet Earth. If it were, then he would be blessed with riches, since he was one of the Apostles. I did a little tempting here and there and when the time was ripe, he bit like Eve and Adam did."

"What happened then?"

"He went to the High Priests and betrayed Jesus Christ for a miserable thirty pieces of silver. He betrayed Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I sort of got a little even with the Main Man. That's the answer why Judas Iscariot was one of my finest accomplishments."

The camera zoomed on to Judas. He did not appear to be in the best of spirits. The courtroom again was buzzing. Solomon was calling for order. Dante's last words to Lucifer, "No further questions."

Solomon broke in, "The World Court of Religion is adjourned. It will resume in the morning. Lucifer will be questioned by Advocate Calvin at that time."

The judges filed out and Lucifer followed them. Where to? Who knows.

My mouth was open, but no words were coming out. I was dumbfounded, and knew I had to say something before signing off. Finally, I did. "Ladies and gentlemen, how could I possibly describe what you have just heard and seen? No words can depict the scene. The coolness with which Lucifer gave out the names of those who are now in Hell is in itself frightening. At this point, it will be wise to discuss this testimony with the analyst panel after Advocate Calvin interrogates Lucifer. With that, I sign off and will see you again when the *Judas On Appeal* hearing resumes. Good night."

Richard cut.

Dante's last words to Lucifer, "No further questions."

CHAPTER XXVII

"CALVIN VS. LUCIFER"

The next morning I made sure to arrive at the courthouse at about eight-thirty. As usual, Louis and Ryan were right there when I exited the apartment house. For some unexplainable reason there wasn't much traffic. Then I realized that most people were home watching their television sets, awaiting the morning session.

Bos welcomed me and guided me up to 1705 in a flash. He made sure an elevator was waiting to bring us up. Once in the booth, everything was basically routine. Richard was all set and once I had my gear on, I was ready also.

"Testing one, two."

"Loud and clear. Post time is eight fifty-eight. You sure were right about the major surprise yesterday."

"You should know better. When I tell you there will be a major surprise, you can bet on it. I'll be ready to go at post time."

The clock was inching forward. Finally, "Post time."

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV. Welcome this morning to this telecast. I did not get much sleep last night. The probability is the same for many of you who are tuned in this morning. Yesterday's testimony by Lucifer can only be described by a number of adjectives. Some

are extraordinary, weird, mind-boggling, and perhaps best of, frightening."

"Post time."

"Ladies and gentlemen, the court deputy is about to begin. Let's listen."

"Ladies and gentlemen, all rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session."

The door opened and Solomon headed the parade of judges. "Please be seated. Without further ado, Advocate Calvin, are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, I am."

"Fine, please have the court deputy call the witness."

The court deputy strode over to the microphone. "Lucifer, come forth."

The door opened and there he stood.

Definitely, he was about to make a grand entrance.

The individuals in the entire room seemed to be flabbergasted at what they were seeing. Some had an expression of non-belief. This morning, Lucifer was wearing a bright red toga. About his head, he was wearing a crown which Julius Caesar would tend to wear. A solid gold chain and a medallion hung around his neck. His hair was again slicked back. His gaze, like yesterday, was most piercing. His feet were covered with sandals. He walked to the witness stand and sat. A wicked smile appeared.

Advocate Calvin slowly rose from his chair and for a split second, he seemed to hesitate. He began to walk toward the witness stand and

suddenly, he stopped. He had a strange, pensive expression on his face. The courtroom was enveloped in complete silence. This was a different advocate this morning. The Advocate Calvin from previous days was one of fire. This Advocate Calvin was one who seemed to have completely lost his spark. All eyes were centered on one individual. Suddenly, Solomon broke in, "Advocate Calvin, is something wrong? Are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, judges of the World Court of Religion, I am ready to proceed. However, before I proceed, I ask the panel of judges if I may make a statement, before I begin the interrogation of the witness?"

A puzzled expression appeared on almost all of the faces in the courtroom. I definitely was perplexed. Solomon looked at all of the judges, and each nodded their approval.

"Advocate Calvin, your request has been granted."

"My thanks. I feel before I begin to question the witness, I must inform the court of certain circumstances. I have been chosen to be the advocate for Judas Iscariot. It means I am expected to do my utmost in my duties as an advocate, to attain a favorable verdict for my client. I must first reveal the basic fact that my soul presently resides in the habitat of Lucifer. Yes, my soul is in Hell."

Shock and gasps filled the courtroom. Solomon began to bang the gavel and pleaded for silence.

"Now, I am asked to question the ruler of my residence. There will be those who would say I did not do my best because of fearful consequences."

Solomon interrupted, "Advocate Calvin, do you wish to be relieved of this position of being the advocate?"

"No, I do not want to be relieved. I want to make it perfectly clear that I will do the best I know how to win. No matter what consequences will befall me, I have only one aim. The aim is to win this appeal so that the soul of Judas Iscariot will be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

The courtroom exploded with applause. Solomon banged away and screamed for order. A fire was lit in Advocate Calvin as he came to the witness stand. Lucifer looked at him with complete disdain, but said not one word.

"Lucifer, is that your name, as well as Satan?"

"You know it is."

"Yesterday, you were dressed in a tuxedo, the apparel of the nineteen-hundreds. Today, you are dressed in the garment of the days of Julius Caesar. Is there any reason for the difference?"

"Not really. I am an individual who transcends all ages. I go back to the early days of creation, and will be here and beyond, after Planet Earth no longer exists."

"Do you mean for all eternity?"
"Yes, for all eternity."

Gloom quickly settled over the courtroom. Richard made sure to scan the camera over the faces of those who did not look too happy.

"Was there any particular reason why you chose the garments of Roman times?"

"Yes, there was. The entire episode of this hearing took place during the reign of the Romans. Also, Julius Caesar and his paramour, Cleopatra, were two of my most successful projects. I felt I should let all know of Caesar's and Cleopatra's residence. I'm sure you have met them once or twice."

Lucifer just made sure to emphasize where Calvin's soul was. The spectators were nudging each other. In a figurative way, Calvin's ears were spouting steam.

"I have told the court of my soul's residence. It does not seem necessary to attempt to ridicule me further."

"Advocate Calvin, you ask the questions. I answer them as I see fit."

"Very well, I will proceed. Did you testify of Judas Iscariot's weaknesses?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you say he was a little more difficult than other souls?"

"Yes, I did."

"Was he difficult because he was one of the Apostles?"

"Yes."

"Did you know he was the manager of the money for Jesus Christ and the Apostles?"

"Yes, I knew he was."

"Then you knew he was materialistic in his mind?"

"Yes."

"Did you know he was befuddled in his thoughts about kingdoms?"

"Yes."

"Did you know when Jesus Christ spoke of kingdoms he was referring to Heaven and Judas thought the Kingdom was on Planet Earth?"

"That is true."

"Did you know that his disillusion would eventually cause him to go the High Priests and seek a reward for the betrayal of Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I knew."

"Did you know that after the betrayal of Jesus Christ, Judas Iscariot would return to the High Priests and give back the measly thirty pieces of silver, the reward for the betrayal?"

"Yes."

"Did you know Judas Iscariot was completely filled with remorse when he realized Jesus Christ was going to be crucified?"

"Yes, I knew."

"Did you know Judas Iscariot was in complete despair, and he would then go hang himself from a tree?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you testify a little while back that you transcend all time, from the earliest days to all time of eternity?"

"Yes, I did make that testimony."

"Then please tell the court. Is it true you knew, from the beginning of Planet Earth, that one day a soul whose name was Judas Iscariot would betray the Son of God, Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I did."

"Would you say that you did not have to do anything to obtain the soul of Judas Iscariot? His soul was handed to you on a silver platter, because his soul was placed on Planet Earth to do what he was chosen to do?"

"Yes, it was."

"Lucifer and the panel of judges, I have no further questions."

Lucifer screamed, "Calvin, you will pay for that interrogation!"

Calvin retorted, "So what, who cares?"

The courtroom turned into bedlam. The spectators were applauding and booing. Solomon banged and banged. The marshals in the front row turned to the spectators in order to prevent any travesties. I did not believe what I just witnessed.

I turned on the mike and Richard put the camera on me. "Ladies and gentlemen, you have just seen a brilliant interrogation by Advocate Calvin. He actually had Lucifer admit to the courtroom that Judas Iscariot's soul was placed on Planet Earth for the sole purpose to betray Jesus Christ. Hold on. Judge Solomon is about to make an announcement."

"Ladies and gentlemen. This session of the *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now concluded. The next session will be tomorrow morning."

The judges all rose and left the courtroom. Lucifer followed them and the court deputy brought up the rear.

"You have heard the announcement. The hearing will be on at nine in the morning. Also, the testimony of Lucifer is most explosive. I must discuss it with the analyst panel. Stay tuned, and I will be back after our station break."

CHAPTER XXVIII

"ANALYST PANEL—LUCIFER"

"Friends, please stay tuned. I will now speak with the analyst panel. I am sure you will find their remarks quite interesting. Analyst panel, can you hear me?"

"Yes, Mr. Sarto. This is Aristotle speaking."

"Aristotle, the audience and myself are interested in hearing the opinions of the panel regarding the testimony of Lucifer. With your permission, I will begin with you."

"Whatever you wish."

"Did you feel that Lucifer was rather flippant during the interrogation by Advocate Dante?"

"Without a doubt. Lucifer, in a way, was rather in a boastful mood. His naming of the souls in his habitat proved the point of his boasting."

"Did Advocate Dante score points for Christianity by asking Lucifer to name a soul in the courtroom?"

"Yes, he did. Naturally, when Lucifer named Judas as the soul who resides in Hell, Dante drove home an important point. Dante wanted all to know Judas' soul resides in Hell."

"Thank you for your comments. Sir Thomas More, I would like to hear your opinion of Lucifer's

testimony. First would you comment about Dante's interrogation?"

"Certainly, Mr. Sarto. Dante guided Lucifer as much as possible. However, to me it appeared that Lucifer had the upper hand during the interrogation. As my associate pointed out, Dante was able to have Lucifer admit to the fact that Judas Iscariot's soul resides in Hell. It seems to me that was the main focus of Dante's interrogation of Lucifer."

"What did you think of the interrogation of Lucifer by Advocate Calvin?"

"If I may say, his interrogation was a work of art. Advocate Calvin led Lucifer through a series of questions, and then he drove across a major point. When Advocate Calvin fired at him the soul of Judas Iscariot was literally handed to him, Lucifer could not retort with any recourse."

"I thank you. Now please, Martin Luther. Would you be so kind to offer your comments regarding the testimony of Lucifer?"

"With pleasure. Lucifer, at first, tried to show his importance in this hearing. That is why he made it a point to mention the names of various souls. It was especially true during the interrogation by Advocate Dante. Yes, when Lucifer named Judas Iscariot as the soul in the courtroom, he played the card which Dante was seeking. I'm sure Lucifer does not want to lose a soul, even one. If Judas is allowed to go into the Kingdom of Heaven, Lucifer loses one soul. Lucifer was in a position to

name others. However, Dante needed Judas' name and Lucifer gave it to him."

"What about Advocate Calvin's

"I agree with Sir Thomas' opinion. It was exceptional, to say the least. First, when Advocate Calvin admitted to his residence in Hell, he threw all caution to the wind. He knew Lucifer would be a most belligerent witness. Therefore, he forced Lucifer to answer only questions which required yes or no answers. When Advocate Calvin stressed the point of being handed a soul on a silver platter, Lucifer was admitting, in a way, Judas Iscariot's soul was predestined. Yes, Advocate Calvin's interrogation was letter-perfect."

"I thank you and once again I thank the analyst panel for your keen observations of the Lucifer testimony. Ladies and gentlemen, there is nothing else to add at this point. I will be back with you when the *Judas On Appeal* hearing resumes tomorrow morning. This is Michael Sarto of WCS TV bidding you, take care."

Ryan remarked, "Mr. Sarto, you OK? You turned sheet white."

"I'm fine. Maybe I'm coming down with some bug. I'll be better in the morning. Some rest will cure what ails me. Let's get out of here."

We all said good night and Ryan and I began to walk down the steps toward the limo. Louis had the back door open, waiting for me to get in. Ryan and I had gone down about five steps when it happened. What seemed like a thunder clap exploded in my ear. It took only a split second. A segment of Ryan's head went flying.

I began screaming, "Oh God. Oh God."

Ryan just slumped down and began tumbling down the steps. I was frozen, but I saw through my daze that Louis was running up toward me and I kept hearing, "No, no, someone shot Ryan. Someone shot Ryan."

In my frozen stupor, I kept saying to myself, it can't be. No, it can't be. That shot was meant for me. That shot was meant for me. In what seemed like another split second, Bos had his arms around me, yelling at me, "Come on, Mr. Sarto, you got to get out of here. Come on, man, let's go. The marshals will take care of Ryan."

I could only see a group of uniforms over something. Bos literally carried me back into the courthouse. He brought me straight into the security office, and I began to shake, and then went into shock. Cold sweat completely enveloped my body. My teeth chattered, as though Sammy Davis, Jr. was tap-dancing in my mouth.

CHAPTER XXIX "DISASTER LURKING"

I sat for a few minutes after signing off. All of a sudden, a completely uneasy feeling came over me, and I could not explain what it was exactly. However, something was about to happen...and whatever was about to happen wasn't good.

Richard was getting ready to leave when he asked, "Are you all right?"

"Sure, and yet not so sure."

"What's wrong?"

"To tell you the truth, I don't know. I know something will happen. What? I really don't know."

"Maybe this hearing is starting to get to you. It's crawling under your skin, and you don't realize it."

"Perhaps you are right. Let's go. Tomorrow is another day."

Out we walked. As usual, Bos was waiting for us to escort us out to the courthouse steps.

"Mr. Sarto, that session this afternoon was out of this world. I might add, way out."

"You are on target, Bos. It surpassed any space shot."

When we got to the doors of the lobby, Ryan joined us. All at once that queasy feeling hit me again. This time more intense than earlier.

"You'll be all right, Mr. Sarto. You'll be all right. A doctor will be here any minute. You'll be all right."

"How's Ryan? How's Ryan?"

No one answered. Tears rolled down my face.

CHAPTER
XXX
"REWARD"

Bos had Louis bring the limo to the back entrance where defendants are brought in and out of the courthouse. He called home and told Rose I was in decent shape. I was sure by now the entire news media were splashing the story over the networks.

Also, he had Rose call Dr. Geisler, and ask him to meet me at home. Once I regained my composure, I still could not believe what happened. Bos then called the station and told Irene to call Richard. "Mr. Sarto wants him to go to his apartment, with a camera, as soon as he can."

Bos and I headed to the limo. To my surprise, there were two patrol cars waiting outside. As soon as Louis pulled out, one patrol car was in front, and the other was in back of the limo. Both cars had lights flashing. The front car guided us home. Pete, the doorman, jumped out as soon as the cars came to the front door. Rose was in the lobby and she ran out also.

"I'm fine, Rose, I'm fine."

"Not what I heard."

"What you heard is not true. Believe me, I'm fine. Let's get upstairs. I have work to do."

I turned and thanked the two officers who had escorted us home. They asked if there was anything else that was needed.

"No, thank you. You both did more than enough."

Pete had the elevator doors open. After we were in the elevator, Rose threw her arms around me and hugged me as tight as she could.

"Michael, I was fearing the worse. I thought the newpeople were not telling the truth. They did not say if you were hurt or not. They were saying about Ryan being killed by a sniper's bullet, as he was walking alongside of you. I was totally frightened."

"I'm fine. I'm fine. Just went into shock. Bos did a great job to get me out of there. He didn't want to gamble that there would be a second or third shot."

The elevator reached our floor and we rushed into the apartment. My jacket and tie came flying off.

"Rose, while I wash my face and hands, please call the station. Ask Irene if she reached Richard and ask her to track down Worthington. Have him call here immediately."

"Yes, your highness."

"G.T., don't break chops now. I have six million things on my mind."

I went to freshen up, and when I came out, Rose gave me the report. "Richard is on his way here. She will try to track down the alcoholic. She has been trying, since she heard the news. She is about to put out an all-points bulletin if you want her to?"

"No, I don't need an all-points bulletin. Don't worry, he'll show up, one way or another."

The intercom rang. "Mrs. Sarto, Richard, the cameraman, is here."

"Please, send him up. Why is Richard coming here?"

"I'm going to make a tape. I'm going to offer a reward."

"You what? Without the alcoholic's permission?"

"Screw Worthington. He told me I had a blank check and I could do whatever I wanted to do."

"Well, I'm doing it."

"I don't know. You might be overstepping your bounds."

"Do I need you to bug me now?"

The doorbell rang. Rose went to answer and brought in Richard. He had his camera ready to work.

"How are you, Mr. Sarto?"

"Fine, Richard, I'm glad you got here this quick. Here is what I want to do. We will do a tape in my study. I'm going to make an announcement about a reward. Then I want you to get it to the station as soon as you leave here. Have them run the tape on the hour and the half-hour. Run it twenty-four hours a day for the next two days. Understand?"

"I sure do."

"Good, let's get going."

Rose was looking at me as though I was off the wall. The phone rang and Rose answered it.

EXHIBIT 1
Part 3
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

"Yes, Mr. Worthington, he is right here." She handed me the phone.

"Yes, Mr. Worthington, I'm fine. Believe me, I'm fine. Glad you called. We were just about to make a tape with Richard. I will announce that WCS will offer a reward of one hundred thousand dollars for the killer. What? You want to offer two hundred fifty thousand? I knew I could count on you. Thanks, please call back in a little while, because I want to do the tape. Yes, I'm fine. Thanks again, take care."

I handed the phone to Rose. "See, G.T., you should have more faith."

She slammed the phone on the receiver.
"Come on, Richard. Let's get this over with."

We walked into the study. I was in shirt sleeves, for I wanted to appear as natural as possible. "Richard, ready?" He gave me his usual nod.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV. I'm sure by now that you have heard of the vicious murder of the fine police officer, Ryan. Everyone will agree that the sniper who performed this cowardly act had to be amongst the lowest of mankind. Mr. Worthington, the CEO of WCS, myself and everyone who has an affiliation with WCS want this individual brought to justice. We all want, and I'm positive that you want also, the coward to pay for his crime. To help speed up the apprehension of the coward, WCS TV is offering a reward of two hundred fifty thousand

dollars for the apprehension and conviction of the sniper. Please call your local police precinct with any information. All information will be confidential. Thank you.

"Do you have it all?"
"Sure do."

"Good, take it to the station and have them run it. If anyone gives you any problem, have them call me."

"There won't be any problem. I'm positive."

"Take care. Call me in the morning."
"See you. Good night, Mrs. Sarto."

"Good night. Be careful," she replied.
Rose turned the TV set on and began

switching channels. The only thing on the air was about the shooting and killing. Jennings, Brokow, and Rather were all on the air.

The intercom rang. Pete called out, "Dr. Geisler is here."

"Send him up, Pete."

Within two minutes, Dr. Geisler was at the open door. He came rushing in.

"You OK, Michael?"

"Yes, Doctor, I'm fine. My greatest sorrow is that poor kid was killed."

"I could understand it. Let's get your shirt off and have me check you out."

I obeyed like a puppy and we headed to the bedroom. I took my shirt off and he did his usual routine work.

"You seem to be OK. I brought a sedative with me. You should take it before you go to sleep. You should get a good night's sleep. You are going to need all the rest you can get. You have some hectic days ahead of you."

"You hit it right on the head. Hectic is an easy way out. Leave the sedative. I'll take it before I get to bed. Would you like a drink of some kind?" "No, not now. I'm on my way to the hospital to check out a patient. I ran over when my secretary beeped me, after Rose called."

"Thanks for coming over."

"For you and Rose, anytime. That's what friends are for."

Rose and I replied, "See you, Doctor. Take care."

After he left, Rose asked me if I wanted to eat anything. I had no appetite, and was truly sick to my stomach. My thoughts were of the shooting, and I really wanted to go and throw up my guts. "No food, just some hot tea. I'll take a shower, take the sedative and get into bed. Maybe I'll relax awhile before conking out."

"That's a smart idea."

CHAPTER XXXI "GUARD CHANGE"

I woke up at about eight-fifty the next morning. The sedative which Dr. Geister had given me worked to perfection. I slept like a newborn baby.

When I checked the time, I realized the station should be showing the tape for the reward. The television was on, and at nine sharp an announcement was made. "Ladies and gentlemen, WCS TV interrupts the program to bring you an important bulletin." Sure enough, the tape was on the television.

I called out, "Rose, the tape is on. It seems everything is in place."

"What did you expect? You should know how everyone realizes what you mean to WCS."

"Come on. Stop teasing me."

"I'm not teasing. It's the truth."

Just then the intercom buzzed. Rose answered, "Yes?"

"Mrs. Sarto, Officer Anthony Luhs is here. He would like to see Mr. Sarto?"

Rose looked at me, and I nodded.

"It's all right, Pete. Send the officer up."

While he was coming up, I went into the bathroom and freshened up. When I came out, this fine-looking young police officer was waiting.

"Mr. Sarto, my name is Anthony Luhs. I'm sorry to bother you this early."

"It's no bother. What can I do for you?"

"Well, sir, Officer Ryan was a very dear friend of mine. I still can't believe what happened to him yesterday."

"Neither can I. Neither can I. Please have a seat. Would you like some coffee, tea or juice?"

"No, thank you. I do not want to impose on you."

"It's no bother, whatever you wish."

"I'll have some juice. Any kind will do."

"Rose, I'll have some grapefruit juice and the same for Officer Luhs. Please."

Rose went for the juice, and arrived with it in a few minutes.

"Did you meet Mrs. Sarto?"

"Yes, when I came up."

"Please tell me what you were about to say."

"I knew Ryan was assigned to be your bodyguard. When I heard about the incident, I went to my commanding officer and asked if he would get me transferred to take Ryan's place. He has some connections in the commissioner's office and it was arranged. I came here to inform you of the change. Also, I would like you to know there is a massive manhunt out for the sniper. All systems are already in action. These systems begin operating as soon as a police officer is killed. Funeral

arrangements were being made last night and early this morning. The wake will be held tonight at Giordano's Funeral Home on Crosby Avenue, in the Bronx. Mr. Ralph Giordano and Mr. Pat Farenga will be co-directors of the funeral. The teletype

messages have gone out to all police operations in the tri-state region. Inspector O'Neil heads the department which coordinates all segments of the funeral with the next of kin. I presume you will attend the viewing?"

"Positively."

"I knew you would. This evening you will meet Mrs. Ryan and Inspector O'Neil. The Funeral Mass will be held at a little church in East Harlem, Our Lady Queen of Angels."

"What time is the viewing this evening?"

"It's from seven to ten. I will be downstairs waiting for you at the time you would like."

"How long will it take to go from here to the funeral home?"

"About thirty minutes."

"Is seven-thirty OK? I'll have the limo waiting, and you will join my wife and me."

"Perfect. I'll be waiting. Some other points, please. It is not known if the sniper will take a second shot. It is not known who the shot was for. No chances are to be taken. I understand you have a bulletproof vest."

"I do."

"Does Mrs. Sarto have one?"

"No, she does not."

"I took it on myself to bring one for her. Please understand. I would not want anything to happen to either one of you. Please have her wear it and you wear the one you have."

"Thank you for your concern. I assure you, both of us will wear the vests. Is there anything else?"

"Not really at this point. However, all the people I have spoken to are gratified at the reward WCS is offering. It surely will help to generate leads."

"Mr. Worthington, the CEO, was positive when I made the suggestion for the reward. I'll send flowers today to the funeral home. Please let me write it down."

"It is Giordano's Funeral Home, on Crosby Avenue in the Bronx."

"Good. I'm sure the florist will get them there in time. I'll see you at seven-thirty tonight. I am very pleased to meet you. Ryan always spoke very highly of you."

"Mr. Sarto, Ryan loved his assignment with you. I knew how he felt, and I want to complete it for him. I'll see you tonight. Please say thank you to Mrs. Sarto."

"Thank you, and take care."

As soon as he left, Rose came into the living room.

"I'm sure you heard what Officer Luhs said."

"Michael, you know I don't eavesdrop unless it is necessary," she said, smiling.

"Anyway, will you please order a flower piece from us. Make sure the card reads, 'Ryan, I know we will meet again.' Have it signed with both our names. The name of the funeral home is on this

paper. The florist will find the exact address. Thanks, and here is a vest for you to wear while you are out with me. The officer does not want us taking any chances."

"Do you think the sniper could try again?"

"Right now, I don't know what to think."

The limo pulled up right in front when Luhs spoke, "This is it."

Louis jumped out to come and open the back door. When Rose and I exited the limo, I could not believe what I was seeing. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of police officers were all standing around. Now I understood why the street was blocked off. Luhs told Louis to wait right there until he got back to him. If he had to move, he was to pull the limo to the other side of the street. He then escorted us to the entrance. There were two officers in dress uniform, one on each side of the entrance doors. They were staring straight ahead. No face movements at all. As we walked into the lobby, another group of officers. One could easily see these uniforms revealed they were from all areas, not only New York City. The room where Ryan's body lay was straight ahead. Rose grabbed my arm as we walked into the room. Luhs led the way, and we followed. The room was wall-to-wall officers. Flowers lined the back walls. Then I saw the coffin draped with a flag. Two immaculately dressed officers were standing guard on each side of the coffin. Ryan's photograph sat on the top of the coffin. His smile came out from the photograph and grabbed me. Rose and I approached the coffin, and I was just about to kneel and say a prayer when I heard this shriek from a lady.

"Ryan won't be by your side anymore! Ryan won't be by your side anymore!" She was sobbing uncontrollably.

Ryan won't be by your side anymore! Ryan won't be by your side anymore!" She was sobbing uncontrollably.

CHAPTER XXXII "ANGUISH AND TEARS"

The day flew like the wind. Rose and I began dressing at about seven. We wanted to be ready to go at seven-thirty, just as I promised Officer Luhs. At seven-thirty, the intercom buzzed. I answered it.

Pete called out, "Mr. Sarto, your limo is here."

"Thanks, Pete. I'll be right down."

I went into the bedroom to ask Rose if she was ready.

"Two minutes, and I'll be all set."

I checked the mirror and saw all was in place, and I heard, "Let's go."

When we came off the elevator and walked into the lobby, Louis and Officer Luhs were waiting. Luhs was now in a dress uniform; he sure made a handsome figure. Louis had the back door open. Rose and I went in and Luhs joined Louis in front. Luhs had given explicit instructions to Louis, and within a half-hour we arrived at Crosby Avenue in the Bronx. To my amazement, it seemed that the street was blocked off. Luhs had Louis approach the barricades. An officer came to the limo. Luhs spoke to him. Immediately we were allowed in. Luhs pointed out the funeral home toward the middle of the block.

CHAPTER
XXXIII
“EULOGY”

I turned and she was in my arms, sobbing the sobs of a person hurt to such an extent that no one could describe.

I held her tight for a few minutes, as she tried to compose herself. I kept whispering to her, “Yes, Ryan will always be by my side. Yes, Ryan will always be my side. Perhaps his body will not be by my side. But his spirit will be by my side every day of my life on earth.”

Hearing those words, she broke out into another set of sobs. She held me close to her.

As I followed the procession, I was in a most somber mood. The wake last evening took its toll. Twisted and turned the entire night, while I was attempting to fall asleep. No luck whatsoever. The thunderclap of the shot was what I was hearing. I kept on seeing the section of Ryan’s head flying, and him tumbling down the courthouse steps. A quick summary of how I felt: *not in top shape*. Since I promised Mrs. Ryan that I would deliver the eulogy, I was trying my best to dig into my emotional well. Nothing was written out, for I felt the words had to come from my mind and heart.

Rose tried to offer some comfort, but it was to no avail. She kept assuring me that the eulogy would come out fine if I would just say what I felt. She suggested a path, and I decided to take it. The best thing to do was to let out what was inside of my very being.

As I looked around this little church, there wasn’t one empty space. Ryan had attended Our Lady of Angels School when he was a child. Subsequently, he was baptized, received his First Holy Communion, and Confirmation here. One of his relatives informed me that he had served as an altar boy in his grade school years. The outside aisles were lined with policemen from the entire tri-state area.

Thousands of them arrived to pay homage to their fallen comrade. In the balcony the choir was ready to participate in the High Mass with three priests. The new Cardinal designated a Bishop to be the celebrant of the High Mass. The three of them greeted the coffin at the entrance and guided it to the gate before the main altar. After the initial prayers were said, the celebrants commenced the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The first part went rather quickly. During this segment, one could easily hear sobs of those in attendance. The sobs came from all sections of the church. The policemen, who lined the outside aisles, had extremely grim faces. After the Mass, the Bishop motioned to me to come to the pulpit to deliver the eulogy.

Rose squeezed my hand. She was offering encouragement. I returned her squeeze and entered the altar by way of the small side gate. From the pulpit I looked at the flag-draped coffin and closed my eyes for a few moments. Then I began to speak, "Mrs. Ryan, Mr. Governor, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Police Commissioner, and all of you who have come to pay homage to Officer Ryan, I will be the very first to admit, this Funeral Mass is a very, very sad occasion."

A lady's wail of sorrow could be heard by the entire assembly.

"Let's look at all the sad facts which have brought us here together. Mrs. Ryan has lost her husband after being married for a short time, only five years. She has lost her best friend. She has lost

her confidant. She has lost her inspiration to do the things which both of them had planned to accomplish. At this moment I would venture to say that she has lost her desire to keep on living without her right arm and soul, who Ryan was."

Sobbing and weeping from all sections. Fighting my tears, I had to keep on going.

"Mr. Mayor, Mr. Police Commissioner. The two of you have lost one very fine police officer. You have lost a policeman who was duty-bound. You have lost a policeman who was honest and full of integrity. You have lost a policeman who always, and I don't mean sometimes, did his job. Yes, he did his job every waking hour. He proved what I have just said, time and time again."

More sobbing and weeping. Some policemen, in the aisles, were wiping away tears. My tears were fighting to come out.

"Policemen. All of you, who have come here today, and those of you who wanted to be here, but were not able to, I know how proud you all are of Officer Ryan. He wore the uniform that you all wear, with immense pride. He or she who wears a police officer's uniform feels a certain pride. A pride which can only be felt by the individual who wears the uniform. Ryan, in a million years, would never have dreamed of desecrating the police officer's uniform. He cherished being a policeman. I am sure all of you share the same pride and feeling that Ryan always felt."

Some officers turned their faces toward the wall to weep. Yes, grown men and women actually shedding tears.

"Mr. Governor, you also have lost, as did the mayor and police commissioner, yes, you have lost, because Ryan was an outstanding man who accepted his duties and responsibilities and fulfilled them in a serious manner. It doesn't make a bit of difference whether the police officer is in Buffalo, Syracuse, New York City or Albany. Each and every one of them has an important obligation to live up to his oath, and to dispatch his duty to the citizens in whose area they are assigned. For proof of this, just look around this church. Police officers came from everywhere. Ryan was one special police officer to New York City, New York State and also to the entire nation."

Some were sobbing in an uncontrollable manner. I was now forced to take my handkerchief, and wipe the tears from the corners of my eyes. I could not stop now.

"For the rest of the congregation, who are gathered here, I know you probably feel like I do. Yes, I feel sad. How sad? I feel a sadness which is impossible for me to put into words. You are probably wondering why I can't tell you exactly how Believe me, I would love to tell you exactly how sad I feel. But, you know what? There are times when words cannot describe. They cannot make you understand the ache in the pit of your stomach. The pain which sears the very soul is unimaginable. It is the incredible pain which I feel and all of you

feel. The pain of sorrow reaches the deepest recesses of our very being."

At this point, I had to take a sip of water and wipe away a very determined tear that had fought its way out. I began to focus my gaze at the coffin.

"Friends, I would like you to concentrate on the flag-draped coffin which holds Officer Ryan. I sincerely believe we all know of our sadness. I now must begin to believe it is time to start feeling joy. 'Joy,' you say? Are you crazy? How can we feel joy at a time like this? Please bear with me, if you will. Ryan gave up his life while protecting me from a sniper's bullet. He gave up his life for his fellow man. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, preached to one and all, 'No greater love has any man, than to give his life for his brethren.' The reward for giving up one's life is to be with Jesus in Heaven. I say to you, one and all, yes, it is a time to be sad. The remains of Ryan will be placed in his grave.

However, it is also a time to be joyful. Ryan's spirit has departed from his mortal body. It is on the way to where all true believers of Christ crave to be when they die. All wish to go through those gates which are under the oversight of St. Peter, and into the wide-open arms of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Ryan's spirit will enjoy the full blessings of heavenly rest. He will be waiting for each and every one of us to join him once again. Yes, it is time to be joyful. Thank you."

The choir began to sing, at first a little louder, then at a soft hum,

"When the saints come marching in,

when the saints, come marching in,
 Ryan will be there in that number,
 when the saints come marching in."
 The congregation were all standing, looking
 befuddled. Louder now, and the choir began
 clapping to the beat,

"When the saints, come marching in,
 when the saints come marching in,
 Ryan will be there in that number,
 when the saints come marching in."
 I joined the choir and began to sing and clap.
 The congregation followed my lead and joined in
 with gusto. The sound echoed throughout Our Lady
 of Angels.

"When the saints, come marching in,
 when the saints come marching in,
 Ryan will be there in that number,
 when the saints come marching in."

CHAPTER XXXIV "DANTE'S SURPRISE"

Monday morning, after the funeral, I arrived at the courthouse at eight forty-five. Officer Luhs and Louis did not do much talking on the way to the courthouse. Outside of some brief greetings, I was left alone with my thoughts. The past week had taken a serious toll on me. Rose tried her best to cheer me up, but wasn't too successful. I kept on seeing Ryan's head flying and him tumbling down the courthouse steps. Bos was waiting and ran down to the limo as we approached. He gave me a bear hug and blurted out, "Mr. Sarto, I'm sure glad to see you!"

"Same here. I really want to thank you for what you did."

"I promised you on that first day that anyone has to go through me to get to you. I will never go back on my word."

"I know you won't. And I will never forget what you did. Thanks again. Let's get up there." Bos had an elevator waiting, and we were in 1705 in no time. Luhs knew what he had to do, and remained behind. He was probably informed of his duties.

Richard's first words, "Ready for action?"

"Guess so. I'm finding it hard to get myself up for this. Maybe when the hearing begins I'll join

the fray. We'll see. Is everything ready in the truck?" "Sure is. They are waiting for you to check in."

I put on my gear. "Testing one, two."

"Loud and clear, Mr. Sarto. Post time is eight fifty-eight. Good to have you back." "I'll be ready. Thanks."

Turning to Richard, "Eight fifty-eight?" He just nodded. It was enough for me. The courtroom was filled to capacity. The side walls were also lined with spectators.

"Post time."

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is Michael Sarto of WCS TV on live at the federal courthouse in New York City. The hearing of *Judas On Appeal* will begin in a few moments. I just want to make note to thank all of you who were kind enough to remember Officer Ryan. Your prayers, flowers and charitable contributions were greatly appreciated by me and his wife, Mrs. Ryan. Please help to find the sniper. Any leads could do it. Again, thank you."

The court deputy was at the mike, "Please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is in session."

The door opened and the judges filed in as usual. All of the judges seemed apprehensive.

After each one took his seat, Solomon spoke:

"Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Before we hear from the witness, I would like to express the judges' sorrow over the killing of the young police officer. It can easily be seen that this hearing is

causing some extremely emotional incidents. Hopefully, we have seen the last of them.

"Advocate Dante, are you ready?"

Dante rose from his seat looking troubled. "Judges of the World Court of Religion, I would like to make a statement to the court."

Everyone in the room looked perplexed, including the judges. Solomon glanced at the panel. They all nodded.

"Yes, Advocate Dante, you have the court's permission."

"Thank you. At this time, I wish to relinquish my position of calling the witnesses. However, I wish to reserve the right to cross-examine any witness called by Advocate Calvin. Also, at a future time, I would like to have permission to call any witness if I so desire. I ask the court's indulgence to grant me this position."

In a way, most were taken aback. Solomon again looked at the judges. Without any reservations, they all nodded their approval.

"Seeing the response, Solomon announced, "Advocate Dante, your request has been granted."

Dante gave out a sigh of relief. All began to wonder why he wanted Calvin to carry the ball. Was he feeling the hearing was not going right for him? I must say something was not right. Loud whispers throughout the room.

Solomon banged the gavel. "Silence, please! Silence! Advocate Calvin, do you wish a slight recess or are you prepared to proceed?"

**CHAPTER
XXXV
“THE FIRST PROPHET”**

“Yes, I would like to have a slight recess. One hour will be fine. It will be sufficient time to have my witnesses called upon, and prepared for their appearance. It will also give me an opportunity to list the future witnesses.”

“Your request has been granted. This session is in recess for one hour.” The judges all filed out.

I could not believe what I had just seen and heard. “Ladies and gentlemen, we have just heard and seen a very strange scenario. Advocate Dante just stopped calling witnesses, and turned the ball over to Advocate Calvin. This was done without any indication whatsoever. The spectators, as you can see and hear, seem to be dumbfounded. Folks, so am I. We will be back on the air in one hour. Take care.”

I cut off and Richard had a cat’s smile on his face.

“What’s so funny?”

“It isn’t funny. It’s downright hilarious. One will never know what will happen at this hearing.”

“I guess you are right. Nobody knows. By the way, how are they going to get a witness ready in one hour?”

Richard’s reply was classic: “Your guess is as good as mine.”

During the short recess Bos, Richard and myself went to the cafeteria for some coffee and tea. The three of us were startled over the early morning proceedings. We also agreed concerning the crazy situations which had developed since the hearing began. Before I knew it, the time arrived for us to get back to the booth.

As soon as I went into the booth, I put on my gear and checked in with the producer. “Testing one, two. Testing one, two.”

“Loud and clear. Post time will be in less than four minutes. Make sure Richard is ready.”

“Don’t worry. He will be ready, as always.” Richard began to set up. “We will be on in what is now three minutes.” He nodded. The courtroom was filled again to capacity. The analyst panel and the two advocates were in their places. Judas, as usual, was sitting alongside Calvin. He just sat there. He was not showing any emotion.

“Post time.”

The court deputy went up to the microphone. “Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session.” The door opened and Solomon led the parade of judges. Once they were in place, Solomon began, “Ladies and gentlemen, be seated. Advocate Calvin, are you ready to proceed?”

"Yes, I am."

"Without further delay, please call your first witness."

Calvin handed a slip of paper to the court deputy. He headed to the microphone and called out, "Zacharias, the Prophet, come forth."

The door opened and this very old, feeble man appeared. He was dressed in a simple white tunic. His hair and his beard were snow-white and quite long. His steps were slow and measured. The time taken by him to reach the witness stand was double the time of the other witnesses. The entire courtroom was buzzing. Solomon began to bang the gavel, calling for silence. Finally, the Prophet arrived at the witness stand. The court deputy assisted him into the chair. Calvin approached. He did not appear to have the fire of previous days. He began in a slow tempo, "Please give the court your name."

"My name is Zacharias."

"Are you known by any additional names?"

"Yes, I am. I am also known as Zacharias, the Prophet."

Will you please tell the court how you became a prophet."

"In the eighth month, in the second year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to me."

"Will you please tell the court what were the themes of your prophecies?"

"My prophecies dealt chiefly with the coming of the Messias. The book of my prophecies treats of God's providence, His control of all

nations, His bringing victory to Judah, and His purifying of Jerusalem."

Most of the spectators were keenly interested in what was being uttered by Zacharias.

"Will you please tell the court one specific prophecy which was fulfilled."

He thought for a few moments before answering.

"Yes, one prophecy which I made was that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed. That prophecy did come to pass."

"Did you also make a prophecy which concerned one of the followers of the Messias?"

"Yes, I did."

"Will you please tell the court the particular prophecy, dealing with the particular follower, of the Messias."

You could see Zacharias was in extremely deep thought. He took a number of minutes before answering. Calvin did not push him. He waited for Zacharias to speak.

"Please have patience with me. I want to say what is totally correct. I said to them: 'If it be good in your eyes, bring hither my wages: and if it not, be quiet. And they weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me: Cast it to the statuary, a handsome price, that I was priz'd at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the house of the Lord to the statuary.'"

All seemed to look like they could not believe what they had heard.

Calvin asked, "Was what you just said the prophecy of the betrayal of the Messias by one of His followers?"

"Yes, it was."

"When did you make that prophecy?"

"I made the prophecy many centuries before the Messias was born."

"I want to thank you for your testimony. No further questions."

Many spectators were bewildered and the buzz began. Solomon asked for silence. He turned to Dante. "Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?"

"Not at this point. I do not wish to question."

"Agreed. This session is now in recess until this afternoon."

The judges rose and filed out. The court deputy was assisting Zacharias out behind the judges.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you can be sure that Advocate Calvin is leading up to something. Before I ask the analyst panel their opinion, let's wait for this afternoon's session. Take care."

As Bos, Richard and I went on our way to the cafeteria there was a certain din in the air. The morning session was one which created both excitement and confusion. Dante gave the ball over to Calvin. Then Calvin began to dig into his bag of tricks. By calling on Zacharias, it would appear he wanted to go back, way back, before coming up to the time of the crucifixion.

Bos could not seem to contain his fascination with the proceedings. "You know, Mr. Sarto, I can't wait to tell my grandchildren when I get old, where I was during the *Judas On Appeal* hearing."

"Bos, don't you think you have a few more years to go before that happens?"

"Sure, I do. But you can bet I'm going to tell them."

"I hope you live a long life and carry out your dreams. Hey Richard, what about you?"

"Me, I'm in a fantasy world right now." He paused for a long moment, then continued. "It is almost impossible to believe what we are experiencing here every day. I get chills and cold sweats when I am behind the camera. I see it, but as I said before, I sure don't believe it."

We made it easy for ourselves. Bos went to the dessert section. Richard went to the beverage

CHAPTER XXXVI "LUNCH BREAK"

section. I went to the carving board section. In no time flat the three of us were ready to eat.

Bos' enthusiasm was infectious. His eyes were dancing like two young kids doing the hustle.

"Boys, who would ever think a poor southern boy like me would be sitting in and watching history being made, right before my very eyes. If I didn't tear up my knee playing football, I wouldn't even be here. I've sure got to thank the Lord for blessing me this way."

Richard looked at him in his usual shy way. "Bos, you sure have a positive spin about this event, and I mean Event with a capital 'E.' I feel the same way as you do. If I had gone on to law school, I wouldn't be behind the camera recording this colossal episode for history in the making. What about you, Mr. Sartor?"

"There is no way I can possibly describe what I'm feeling about this entire scenario. Yes, there have been some extremely weird moments. There have been some heartbreaks, as with Ryan's death. There have been some invigorating moments watching the parade of witnesses. Absolutely, we have not seen the last of the major fireworks, which Calvin is about to explode. Having Zacharias as a witness will be the first step up the ladder, to present his case. All in all, I definitely agree with the two of you. We are pretty damn lucky to be around and involved in this hearing."

Both were nodding their heads in agreement. Bos chirped, "You are right on the money, man, right on the money."

"Let's go, boys. We have another session to do. I wonder who Calvin will call on next. I'm certain his witness will add to the spectacle." With that, we headed back to 1705.

**CHAPTER
XXXVII
“THE SECOND PROPHET”**

Once in the courtroom, anyone could easily feel the energy and anticipation, which were running rampant. Calvin had given a little peek to what he was planning to do in the morning session. What is expected this afternoon?

Richard was getting ready while I checked in, “Testing one, two. Testing one, two.”

“You are all set. Post time is in three minutes and counting.”

“Right, I’d better start my intro.”

“I’m ready when you are.”

“Richard, are you ready?”

His usual nod.

“OK. Let’s go.”

I took a sip of water and began. “Ladies and gentlemen, this is Michael Sario of WCS TV. In a few minutes the afternoon’s session of the *Judas On Appeal* hearing will begin. The morning session was filled with excitement. No one believes Advocate Calvin will disappoint us in this session.

“As you can see, the courtroom does not have one empty seat. I wonder if anyone went out to lunch, for fear of losing their seats. I see the court deputy is approaching the microphone.”

“Post time.”

Richard had been scanning the courtroom. He turned the camera right on to the court deputy.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session.”

As though on cue, the door opened.

Solomon led the parade of judges. Once seated, he began, “Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Advocate Calvin, are you ready to continue?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Good, please have the court deputy call your next witness.”

The spectators seemed to get to the edge of their seats. So did I. The anticipation of who would be called sent electrical currents through the courtroom.

The court deputy called out, “David, the Psalmist, come forth.”

The door opened, and at the same moment, all in the courtroom stood up to see who was entering. The figure of David was something to behold. He was dressed in a black tunic. His beard and hair were white. However, the hair on his head and face was not as long as Zacharias’. He walked with a measured step, but quicker than Zacharias.

The courtroom felt as though a giant of religion was entering. Surely, the David who slew Goliath was a figure of immense proportions. Solomon was banging his gavel and entreating, “Please be seated. Silence, please. Please be seated.”

I turned to Richard to put Solomon on camera.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please take notice of the expression on Solomon’s face. As David is walking into the courtroom, Solomon is watching

his father going toward the witness chair. To me his expression is filled with pride and admiration. Yes, Solomon is the son of David."

The court deputy helped David into the witness chair and Calvin approached. Again, as he did in the morning session, it was a soft approach.

"Please give to the court your name."

"My name is David, the Psalmist."

"To affirm who you are, are you the David who slew Goliath?"

"Yes, I am. However, I was only able to do that with the help of the Almighty God."

"Were you young when you received the word of the Lord?"

"Yes, I was quite young."

"Did you make a prophecy concerning the coming of Messias?"

"Yes, I did."

"Please tell the court about the prophecy."

"In the Second Psalm I said, '*You are my Son, this day I have begotten you.*' Also in the prophecy were these words, '*And now, O Kings, give heed, take warning, you rulers of earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before Him, with trembling pay homage to Him. Lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His anger blazes suddenly. Happy are all who take refuge in Him.*'" Silence and awe swept over the entire courtroom. I had chicken skin, as I was hearing the words of David. No need for Solomon to bang the gavel.

Calvin asked, "You made a prophecy concerning the coming of Messias, did you make a prophecy concerning the betrayal of one of His followers?"

David thought a few moments before answering. I looked around the courtroom. Some spectators had their mouths open, awaiting David's reply.

"Yes, I did. It was in Psalm forty-one or forty-two."

"Will you please tell the court the prophecy."

"Yes, it was, '*Even my friend who had my trust and partook of my bread, has raised his heel against me.*'"

"Was this the prophecy of the Messias being betrayed by one of his followers?"
"Yes, it definitely was."
"When were these two prophecies made?"
"They were made centuries before the Messias was born."

"Thank you, no further questions."

A light seemed to go on in Judas Iscariot's face. The courtroom was in a stupor. Solomon turned to Dante. "Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?"

"No, not at this point. No questions."

Solomon turned to look at David, who was still sitting in the witness chair. He smiled a smile that only a child can give to his father.

"The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is in recess until tomorrow morning."

The judges began to follow Solomon out of the courtroom. Instead of walking out as usual, Solomon turned and went over to David and hugged and kissed him as only a son does to his father.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have witnessed sessions this morning and this afternoon which have left indelible marks on all of us. Please stay tuned. I will want to ask the analyst panel some questions regarding today's session, right after the station break."

CHAPTER XXXVIII "ANALYST PANEL"

After the station break was completed, I reached the analyst panel. "Good afternoon, gentlemen, this is Michael Sarto of WCS TV. I would like to ask you for some comments regarding today's proceedings."

"Mr. Sarto, this is Aristotle. We will be happy to oblige you. Do you have any preference who you would like to speak to?"

"No, I don't. Hopefully, I will receive comments from the three of you. With your permission, I would like to begin with you."

"I see no problem with your request. What is your question, please?"

"Did you find it very strange when Advocate Dante turned the calling and questioning of the witnesses over to Advocate Calvin?"

"Yes, I found the position which Advocate Dante took to be extremely strange. I honestly cannot understand why he did what he did. However, he probably had a good reason for doing it."

"Were you surprised when the two prophets were called as witnesses?"

"No, I was not. I feel Advocate Calvin will proceed in a very logical approach, in order to win this case. By inviting Zacharias and David to be

witnesses, he is showing that a definite time span was involved in the completion of the Redemplion."

"I thank you for your comments. Please may I speak to Martin Luther?"

"Certainly, Martin Luther speaking. How may I help you?"

"Would you please comment on the testimony of the two prophets."

"I believe the two prophets have certainly made a positive impact for Advocate Calvin. He will try to show to the court there was a definite pattern. The ultimate climax was the crucifixion for the Redemption. These two prophets had proclaimed the coming of the Messias. Also, they made prophecies concerning the betrayal of Jesus Christ by one of his followers. Yes, Advocate Calvin scored some major points for his client, Judas Iscariot."

"Thank you. Now please, Sir Thomas More."

"Thomas More here, how may I help you?"

"Sir Thomas, please give us your comments regarding the testimony of the two prophets."

"Gladly, Mr. Sarto. As my two associates have commented, Advocate Calvin is doing a marvelous job for his client. He is not rushing into uncharted waters. He is taking his time and moving along in a very logical manner. By the way, lawyers should always be logical when they are trying to convince a jury or judge while trying a case. He has now shown the court a definite point that Judas Iscariot was predestined. First, the two

prophets had predicted the coming of the Messias. Secondly, he had both prophets speak of the prophecy which concerned the betrayal by one of the Messias' followers. Very definite, logical steps were taken by Advocate Calvin. It would be very interesting to see who Advocate Calvin will call when the hearing resumes. I hope I have been of some help, Mr. Sarto."

"You certainly have. I wish to thank the three of you for giving the viewers of WCS TV your insights concerning today's testimony. I hope to speak to all of you soon. Good evening."

Richard cut the analyst panel off camera. He then had me on camera.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the analyst panel gave all of us some interesting observations. They seem to find Advocate Calvin's tactics most engaging. Advocate Calvin is far from finished. He has a few surprises that he has yet to show. Please join us when we return tomorrow morning for another fascinating day of Advocate Calvin and the *Judas On Appeal* hearing. Take care."

**CHAPTER
XXXIX
“VIEW ON PUNISHMENT”**

After the telecast, Richard took off rather quickly to take care of some errands. Bos escorted me to the entrance of the courthouse. Officer Luhs was right there waiting for me. Louis had the limo at the bottom of the steps. After a round of good evenings, Luhs and I walked down to the limo. Luhs suggested, “Mr. Sario, don’t walk straight down to the limo. Zig-zag your steps as we walk down. It will make a more difficult target.” A sudden chill took over my body. I repeated to myself, not again, not again, not again. His advice was followed and there were no shots fired. Luhs covered my back as I entered the open door which Louis held open. Once inside, Luhs closed the door behind me and jumped into the front seat.

“Let’s go, Louis,” Luhs commanded. Off we went. A few minutes passed when Luhs remarked, “Mr. Sario, I can easily see why Ryan loved this assignment. He was on target while history was being made. He told me a few times how excited he was just being around you, and the whole experience.”

“Thanks, but unfortunately for Ryan, the assignment was his demise.”

“Just by putting on this uniform we never know when we will take our last breath. We all

know the chances we take because of our uniform. However, we have taken this route with our own free will. Some of us never wind up retiring, like Ryan. Many of us do. If my time is up, I feel there is nothing I can possibly do. At that moment, God Almighty calls the shots.”

“You are probably right in your way of thinking. Before I forget, I have a question to ask you. Have any leads come in about the sniper?” “Mr. Sario, the telephones in all the precincts have been jammed with calls. The detective branch has been on a twenty-four-hour alert. I really don’t know if those detectives are going to get any sleep. I wouldn’t want to be in that bastard’s shoes if and when they catch up with him.”

“You know, I sort of feel the same way you do regarding punishment.”

Louis looked into the rearview mirror and his expression was one of deep anticipation.

“Mr. Sario, what do you mean about punishment?”

“Well, I’ll tell the both of you. If they really want to prevent people committing murders, some radical steps must be taken. You see, the death penalty is an outright joke. First, the governor promises a death penalty before he is elected. After being elected, a death penalty law is passed. Is it ever put into use? No way. It is not put into use when you have yellow-belly district attorneys deciding to push for death penalty or not. If you would cut the veins of the governor or the district

attorneys, instead of red blood coming out, you would see yellow piss. That is what you would see, pure yellow piss. After the killer is convicted, he or she spends year after year in a cozy cell. They are fed. They get medical attention. They get books to read and have a roof over their heads. They have a bed to sleep in and covers to keep them warm.

Generally, I would say they are comfortable until the time comes, if it ever comes, that they are finally put to sleep. Who pays for this? We do. You, Louis, me, and all the taxpayars of this great nation of ours. Why do we treat murderers this way? We do because we are suckers to the nth degree."

Louis was shaking his head from side to side. Luhs was now facing me, and his expression was as if to say, tell me more.

"Are they suffering the pain and sorrow which the victims' families are suffering? How could they? They are in their nice cozy cells. They are receiving all the benefits of those crybabies who rant and rave about cruel and inhuman treatment. They forget, or don't want to consider, the cruel and inhuman treatment of the victims' families. No way. They don't give one ounce of shit about them. So you might ask how do you solve the problem? As I said before, some radical steps should be put into effect. First, give the killer a very fair and honest trial. Have the state assign only top defense lawyers. After the trial has been completed, and the killer is convicted of first-degree murder by the jury, the state makes the final arrangements. A

platform is built in Central Park. At six o'clock in the evening, the convicted killer is brought there.

On the platform will be guards and a doctor. Also, there will be a bucket filled with nitric acid. After the killer has said some prayers, if he so desires, the guard will put the killer's right hand into the nitric acid, up to his wrist. The killer will probably scream a little. Then, his left hand will have his pinky and the next finger completely wrapped. The other three fingers will be dipped into the acid.

Perhaps a few more screams. Now the killer can never again use the right hand to kill. The left hand will have only two fingers left. The two fingers can be used to scoop the food into his mouth and to wipe his ass. After the ceremony is completed, the killer will be taken to a designated hospital until recovery is completed. Here is now the best of all.

Set the killer free. No jail. Let the killer walk the streets as though he was a leper. People will know immediately the person was a killer, and should be treated with all disrespect, including being spat on and kicked. No cozy cells, no good and decent food for this heartless bastard. Let him or her experience pain and suffering that the victims' families go through. After a few of those ceremonies, how many murders do you think will be committed?"

"Mr. Sarto, I think one ceremony will do the trick." Louis pulled the limo up to the entrance of the apartment house. Both of them had a look of shock.

"See you both in the morning. Take care."

CHAPTER
XL
"THE FIRST EVANGELIST"

My limo approached the courthouse the next morning, and to my surprise enormous crowds were behind the barricades. Luhs ordered Louis to drive to a spot which then became an alley along the steps. After doing so, the limo stopped right in front of the courthouse. Bos was waiting, and he was halfway down the steps as Luhs and I walked up.

"Bos, stay in front of him. I'll cover his back. Zig-zag while walking up."

"You got it, man. Just stay close and follow me."

We reached the entrance doors. Bos called out, "All set, Luhs, see you later."

"He's all yours. I'll see you when you're through."

"Take care, Luhs, see you."

Bos had me inside and the vestibule seemed like one big madhouse.

"Bos, what is going on?"

"I'm not sure but as you can see, people are all over the place. I mean inside and outside. The phone in the security office has been ringing off the hook. Dignitaries, celebrities, you name them, want seats for the hearing."

"What's being done about it?"

"Outside of the President, or Vice President, the chief told them first come, first served. No reservations."

I shook my head in disbelief.

"Come on, Mr. Sarto. We are going up by the back way. It's much safer and quicker."

"Whichever way you want to go is fine with me. I'm in your hands. By the way, is Richard here yet?"

"Sure is. He's been here about twenty minutes."

"Good to know. He never fails me."

We headed in some direction, which I could never find again. Before I knew it, Bos was pushing a button. An elevator door opened, and in we went. Seventeenth floor was our destination and in a flick of a few seconds, the doors opened on the right floor.

"Just follow me."

I did and to my great surprise, 1705 was right in front of me.

"How's that, Mr. Sarto?"

"Bos, you always amaze me. Do you think we can get through this mob?"

"No problem." Bos cleared a path in no time flat. Up the steps, and into the booth we went.

"Bos, remind me to thank you," I called out. "No need. Just doing my job."

I closed the door behind him and exchanged

greetings with Richard. "Do you believe what you are seeing here?"

"Mr. Sarto, if someone told me, I would tell him it was a lie. This crush of people blows a person's mind. What do you think is the reason for this crowd?"

"Well, I think Calvin lit a fire under the pot. Once he became the lead advocate, a new charged atmosphere enveloped the courtroom. By him bringing in those two prophets, he lit the fuse. I'm positive he will continue to keep the wire burning."

While talking, I put on my gear.

"Testing one, two. Testing one, two."

"Loud and clear. Post time in four minutes and counting. Make sure Richard is ready."

"Don't worry. We both will be."

Hearing my words, Richard was setting himself. "Put the camera on me for the intro and then swing to the court deputy. Make sure you scan the room."

He nodded.

"Post time."

"Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV. We are back live for this morning's session of *Judas On Appeal*. As you can see, the entire courtroom is loaded with wall-to-wall spectators. There might be a tiny space somewhere in this room, but you might need a telescope to find it."

The court deputy headed to the microphone.

Richard put him on camera.

"Morning session is about to begin. Let's listen."

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session." As though on cue, the door opened and the Solomon parade entered the courtroom. Advocate Calvin had the appearance of a boxer in a prize fight, who can't wait for the match to start. Yes, he definitely was on edge.

Solomon and the judges sat, and after banging the gavel, "Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Advocate Calvin, are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, I am."

"Good, please have the court deputy call your witness."

The court deputy picked up the slip and went to the microphone.

"John, the Evangelist, come forth."

The door opened and in walked a rather young man. His hair was a dark brown and he had a beard. He was about five foot six or seven and dressed in a simple tunic of brown cloth. He possessed dark brown eyes, and they seemed to pierce anything that he looked at. He followed the court deputy to the witness chair. Once settled in, Calvin approached in the same calm way that he did with the prophets.

I remarked, "This should be quite interesting. John was a beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. Let's listen."

"Will you please tell the court your name?"

"My name is John, the Evangelist."

"Are you also known by any other name?"

"Yes, I am. I'm also known as John, the Apostle."

"Since you were an Apostle, can I presume that you were very close to Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I was."

"Did you always follow Jesus Christ as a disciple?"

He thought a moment. Then, he answered. "First, I was a disciple of John the Baptist. After Jesus Christ called me, I followed Him."

"Did you know the individual sitting at that particular table?"

"Yes, I do."

"Can you identify him?"

"If you wish, I can."

"Please do."

"The individual sitting at that table is Judas Iscariot."

"Was he one of the Apostles who followed Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, he was."

The spectators were inching forward in their seats. They sensed that some explosive testimony was about to happen.

"John, the Evangelist, I would like to go over with you some of the Scriptures which you have written. Do you have any objection to what I have proposed to do?"

"I have no objection at all."

"Good. In chapter six, verses seventy-one and seventy-two, and I quote, '*Jesus answered them, "Have I not chosen you, the twelve? Yet one*

of you is a devil." Now, He was speaking of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for he it was, though one of the Twelve, who would betray Him.' Is this a part of your Scriptures?"

"Yes."

The courtroom began buzzing. Solomon was banging the gavel, and calling for silence. Calvin was standing real close to John, and he was about to pounce on him.

"John, the Evangelist, is this a part of your Scripture? In chapter thirteen, verse eighteen, *'I do not speak of you all. I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against me.'* Please answer my question."

"Yes, it is a part of my Scripture."

"Did Jesus Christ make that particular statement?"

"Yes, He did."

"Do you know who was the one who made that prophecy?"

"Yes, it was David, the Psalmist."

"When was the prophecy made?"

"It was made centuries before the coming of the Messias."

"When and how did you know the betrayer of Jesus Christ was Judas Iscariot?"

"At the Last Supper. Jesus said that one of us would betray Him. I was sitting next to Him. I asked Him, 'Lord, who is it?' He answered, 'It is he for whom I shall dip the bread, and give it to him.' Then, when He had dipped the bread, he gave

it to Judas Iscariot. What I have just spoken is written in chapter thirteen, verses twenty-five and twenty-six."

"I want to go back for one moment. Do you believe the Psalm of David concerning the betrayal of the Messias was fulfilled?"

"Yes, it was, without a doubt."

"Thank you. I have no further questions." Calvin began walking back to his table. The courtroom sounded as though a mob of children were let loose out of school. Solomon was banging his gavel and entreating for silence. Finally, there was silence. Solomon turned to Dante. "Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?"

"Yes, I do."

A major surprise, to say the least. No questions for the first two witnesses, now he wished to question. Dante walked over and stated, "My name is Dante and I am the advocate for Christianity. I would like to ask you a few questions."

"Yes, Advocate Dante, I understand."

"Did all twelve of the Apostles love one another?"

"Yes, we did. He made it a point that we do love one another."

"Did you and the others love Judas Iscariot?"

"Up to a point, I did. However I discovered something that was not to my liking. I made a decision to write it in one of the Scriptures, chapter twelve to be exact."

"Will you please tell the court what that was?"

"Yes, we were having supper at Bethany.

Jesus had resurrected Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with us. Before eating supper, Mary, one of the women, took some ointment of great value. She anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet dry with her hair. *'Judas exclaimed, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii; and given to the poor?" Now, he said this, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and holding the purse, used to take what was put in it.'*"

"Then you regarded Judas Iscariot as a thief?"

"Yes, I did."

"Thank you. No further questions."

Bedlam erupted in the courtroom.

"Silence, silence!" It was to no avail. Shouting! "This session is in recess until this afternoon." Out went the judges' parade. "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm speechless. I must try to digest what happened here this morning. I will contact the analyst panel after the station break. Please stay tuned."

**CHAPTER
XLI
“ANALYST PANEL—JOHN, THE
EVANGELIST”**

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are back on live. The testimony of John the Evangelist has definitely caused some controversy. I will now contact the analyst panel to ask for their opinion.

“Analyst panel, can you hear me?”
“Yes, Mr. Sarto, we do hear you. Also, we recognize your voice. This is Aristotle. What would you like to know?”

“Aristotle, the testimony of John the Evangelist has brought some new light into the proceedings. If you would be so kind, will you please give the television audience your views on the Advocate Calvin’s segment?”

“Well, Advocate Calvin is on course to show a definite pattern. As you know, he had the testimony of the prophets. With that phase completed, he began to bring in the evangelists. The prophets had made the prophecies. Now, the first evangelist testified that Scriptures were fulfilled. The admission of the fulfillment was a plus for Judas Iscariot’s case.”

“Please give us your opinion of Advocate Dante’s segment. Were you surprised when Advocate Dante expressed a desire to question the evangelist?”

“No, I was not surprised at Advocate Dante’s action. He knew he had to defuse some of the testimony. Advocate Calvin had scored major points. By getting the evangelist to admit his feelings against Judas, Dante was able to show the low regard the Apostles had for Judas Iscariot.”

“Thank you very much, Aristotle. May I speak with Martin Luther, please?”
“Martin Luther speaking. What would you like to know?”

“Martin Luther, do you agree with Aristotle’s observations of the evangelist’s testimony?”

“I certainly agree. Advocate Calvin is now on a certain path of attempting to prove Judas Iscariot was predestined. The first segment of the proof was done by having the prophets testify. John the Evangelist was the first evangelist. As I see it, he would probably invite one or two more evangelists, to strengthen his position.”

“What opinion do you have of John, the Evangelist, calling Judas Iscariot a thief?”

“Mr. Sarto, please try to remember, the Apostles were a group of men called by Jesus Christ to follow Him. We cannot truly ascertain how intelligent each Apostle was. Certainly, there were perty jealousies amongst them. The testimony of John, the Evangelist, stating that Judas was a thief, may have had merit. However, it could have been his opinion, and only his opinion. I hope I have answered your questions.”

"You did, and I thank you for your opinions.
May I please speak to Thomas More?"

"I am Thomas More. What would you like
my comments on?"

"Sir, from your legal background, do you
feel Advocate Calvin is progressing in a clever
manner?"

"Mr. Sarto, if I may say so, he is doing a
most professional and clever approach to reach a
positive conclusion. As my two associates have
told you, Advocate Calvin's method of first inviting
the prophets, and then the evangelist, was a most
brilliant stroke. Advocate Calvin has established to
the court the point that a follower of Jesus Christ
would betray Him. The prophets brought that out
when they testified that the prophecies were made
centuries before. I am sure he will call on at least
one more evangelist to solidify John, the
Evangelist's testimony."

"Sir, do you feel Advocate Dante's question
was a factor?"

"Only to a limited point. As Martin Luther
said, there are always petty grievances when any
group of individuals are put together. I do not
believe it would negate Advocate Calvin's
segment."

"I thank the analyst panel for taking the time
to give us your valued opinions. As this hearing
progresses, we hope to be calling on you for your
analysis. Again, thank you."

Richard cut them off and turned the camera
on to me.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the members of the
analyst panel seem to agree about Advocate
Calvin's position. They seem to differ slightly over
Advocate Dante's segment. You, the audience,
have your own opinions of the hearing. It is not
easy to figure out all the avenues and the inferences.
However, no matter, you must admit the hearing has
most riveting moments and more wild moments will
follow. WCS TV will be back on when the *Judas*
On Appeal hearing resumes. Take care."

CHAPTER
XLII
"THE SECOND AND THIRD EVANGELISTS"

The time between the sessions flew like the wind. Before you knew it, the afternoon session was about to begin. Richard was adjusting his equipment, and I put on my gear. After all was in place, "Testing one, two. Testing one, two."

"All set, Mr. Sarto. Post time is in two minutes and counting."

"Fine, we are both ready."

Richard nodded, and the court deputy was advancing to the microphone. As soon as he got there, I heard, "Post time."

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are now on live. Here is the court deputy."

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judicis On Appeal* hearing is now in session."

The door opened, and the members of the Solomon parade headed to their respective seats. Once all were settled, Solomon announced, "Please be seated. Advocate Calvin, are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, I am. However, I would like to inform the court that I plan to call not one, but two witnesses in this session. Since both of the testimonies will be of a rather short duration, it might be wise to do so. May I have the court's permission to act in this manner?"

A number of the spectators and myself raised the eyebrows. We wondered what Calvin was planning to do now. We had to wait and see what would come out of his bag of tricks. Solomon had glanced at the judges, and all of them nodded their approval.

"Yes, Advocate Calvin. Permission has been given to you to call on two witnesses, if you so desire. Please have the court deputy call your first witness."

"I thank the panel of judges for granting me permission." He handed the court deputy the paper, and the court deputy called out, "Matthew, the Evangelist, come forth."

The door opened and a young man, slightly heavy, appeared. He was not too tall, about five foot five, and had darkish brown hair. His beard was also darkish brown. His tunic looked a little worn, and taking a quick glance, one might think he slept in it. He did have a warm smile, and you could not help having a good feeling as he walked into the room. He followed the court deputy to the witness chair and sat. He waited for Calvin to approach, while still smiling.

Calvin approached in a quiet manner. He seemed to take a friendly approach. "Please give the court your name."

"My name is Matthew, the Apostle."

"Will you please tell the court how you became an Apostle?"

"I was a tax collector at Capernaum. One day Jesus Christ came by and asked me to follow

Him. I dropped everything I was doing and began to follow Him. Subsequently I became an Apostle. "Do you recognize anyone in this room who was in the Apostle group?"

"Yes, I do."

"Will you please tell the court who he is." "It is the one sitting at that table."

"Can you tell the court his name?"

"His name is Judas Iscariot."

"Were you with Jesus Christ at Bethany?"

"Yes, I was."

"Were you there when Jesus had His feet anointed?"

"Yes, I was."

"Please tell the court what took place."

"Mary anointed the feet of Jesus Christ with some expensive ointment. Judas came into the room and questioned why the money was spent on ointment and not given to the poor. Jesus Christ chastised Judas. At that point, Judas went to the chief priests. He asked what would they give him for delivering Jesus Christ to them. They assigned him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas sought out an opportunity to betray Him."

"When did you hear from Jesus Christ that one of the Twelve would betray Him?"

"It was on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We all were gathered in a room. While we were eating, He said, 'Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray Me. He who dips his hand into the dish with Me will betray Me.'

"I looked at Judas. He did not look up. His face was drawn. He looked straight down on the table before him."

The spectators were silent for they were sensing some damaging testimony.

"Please tell the court what Jesus Christ then said."

"As I have written in chapter twenty-six, verse twenty-four, He said, '*The Son of Man indeed goes His way, as it is written of him. But, woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had not been born...*'"

"Did Judas reply to Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, he did."

"What did he reply?"

"He said, 'Is it I, Rabbi?' Jesus Christ answered him, 'Thou has said it.'"

The courtroom exploded with buzzing from the spectators. Solomon banged and banged the gavel, asking for silence. Finally, the courtroom had an eerie quiet about it.

Calvin again started the questioning. He leaned close to Matthew before asking, "Did you find it strange that Jesus Christ knew of this betrayal by one of the Apostles, and yet He chose the one who would betray Him?"

"Yes, I did find it strange. However, I did not give any thought of questioning Him. But after His arrest and Judas had kissed Him, Jesus Christ said about defending Himself, '*How then are the*

Scriptures to be fulfilled, that thus it must take place?"

"Are you saying that all this which was happening was being allowed to take place, because the Scriptures had to be fulfilled?"
"To your question, I feel I must answer, yes. The Scriptures had to be fulfilled as Jesus Christ stated."

"Thank you, no further questions."

As Calvin walked back to his table, the courtroom was blistering with the shock of the Evangelist's last admission. Solomon was now entreating for order. He was having a difficult time of it. The courtroom had spectators arguing with each other over the testimony. In order to hasten the proceedings Solomon called out, "Advocate Dante, do you wish to question this witness?"
"No, I do not at this time."

Turning to the witness, Solomon announced, "Matthew, the Apostle, you are excused. Advocate Calvin, please have the court deputy call your next witness."

"Yes, I will."

Calvin handed the paper to the court deputy, who called out, "Mark, the Evangelist, come forth." The door opened, and a young man, similar to Matthew, appeared. He was tall, very slender, and clean shaven. His robe was off-white and he walked with a quick pace. He followed the court deputy to the witness chair, and was ready for interrogation.

Calvin came up to him. "Will you please tell the court your name?"

"My name is Mark, the Evangelist."

"Were you one of the Apostles?"

"No, I was not."

"Did you write some of the Scriptures?"

"Yes, I did."

"How is it that you wrote Scriptures, when you were not one of the Apostles?"

"I recorded the preaching of Peter, the Apostle, basically proving that Jesus is the Savior, and He is Divine."

"Would I be correct if I asked you if what you recorded was heard from Peter, the Apostle?"

"Yes, you are correct."

"When you named the Apostles, who were chosen by Jesus Christ, was Judas Iscariot listed?"

"Yes, his name was listed."

"Is Judas Iscariot in this room at present?"

"I believe he is; however, I cannot be positive."

"Why is that?"

"I have never seen Judas Iscariot with my own eyes."

"Yet, you recorded the statement that Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ."

"Yes, I did."

"How were you able to record the betrayal of Jesus Christ by Judas Iscariot when you have never seen him?"

"As I mentioned before, it was told to me."

"Could you have been mistaken?"

The spectators were anxiously awaiting the answer, for Calvin was searching out doubt of the Scriptures.

"I do not believe I was mistaken in my recording. From what was told to me by Peter, the Apostle, and others, the Scriptures were fulfilled by the betrayal and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ."

"Do you believe the prophecies of David and Zacharias were fulfilled?"

"I certainly do. They made prophecies of the betrayal and crucifixion, and both came to pass."

"When do you believe the prophecies were made?"

"I believe they were made centuries before the coming of the Messias."

"Do you believe that Peter, the Apostle, also believed what you said?"

"I cannot say in total certainty. I would say that he did believe what I have testified." "Thank you, no further questions."

The courtroom was now stunned. Calvin was able to have one of the evangelists testify that Peter, the Apostle, also believed the betrayal and crucifixion was a fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Solomon called for order and announced, "Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?"

"No, I do not at this point."

"Since there are no further questions, the witness is excused. This session is in recess until tomorrow morning."

Solomon's parade exited the courtroom.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Advocate Calvin has just demonstrated an extraordinary ability to establish pertinent information. As you heard from the witness, Peter the Apostle also confirmed the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Advocate Calvin is building a very strong case for his client, Judas Iscariot. I'll be back on when the *Judas On Appeal* hearing resumes in the morning. Take care."

**CHAPTER
XLIII
“*MOST DISTURBING NEWS*”**

I was in the lobby at seven-thirty. Luhs was already waiting for me to come down. As soon as Pete saw me, he rushed over to open the door. I noticed that Luhs had a different look on his face. He did not have the usual jovial expression. After we had exchanged greetings, we entered the limo. Louis started the car and we were on our way to the courthouse.

“Anything wrong, Luhs? Something seems to be bothering you.”

“Mr. Sarto, I’m sorry, there is. It seems that we are going to have our hands full today.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, this morning I received a wake-up call from my former partner on the Task Force. He told me to expect trouble at the courthouse today.”

“Do you mean, where we are going now?”

“Yes, sir, that is one hundred percent correct.”

“What kind of trouble are you talking about?”

“From what he told me, there will be a major demonstration by the Christians. They don’t want Judas in Heaven.”

“Are you joking?”

“I’m far from joking.”

Louis took a peek at me in the rearview mirror. His eyebrows were lifted up to his hairline.

“What group is going to demonstrate?”

“It is not one group. There are three separate groups. Each left last night by bus, train and cars. They are all to meet this morning at the courthouse. The Task Force called in extra men to help control the demonstration. I really don’t know if they will be able to control the demonstrators.”

“Who will be demonstrating?”

“He told me the main group is the Ku Klux Klan.”

“What did you say?”

“Yes, you heard me, the Ku Klux Klan.”

“I find this hard to believe. Who else?”

“The other two are just as bad. The Skinheads or the neo-Nazis is the second group. The third is a contingent of a white supremacist group called the CCC. The CCC stands for the Council of Conservative Citizens.”

“Do you have any idea where they will be allowed to demonstrate?”

“I was told that the barricades will be pushed back about seventy-five feet from the normal positions. All officers will be in riot gear.”

“I imagine the mayor and the commissioner know about this.”

“They sure do. Some informants gave the deputy the news during the night. The mayor and the commissioner had a top staff meeting all night long.”

Louis was driving with one ear listening to our conversation. "Mr. Sarto, this traffic is getting real tight around here."

Luhs jumped in. "Louis, we are going in the back way today. The demonstrators will be in the front. I called Bos and told him to meet us at the back, not the front."

"Hold on, Luhs, where is the truck going to be?"

"I believe it will be in its normal spot.
"If it is in the usual spot, I must get there to televise the demonstration."

"Please, Mr. Sarto, don't tell me you are going to be on top of the truck to televise?"
"Where do you expect me to be? I was on top during the cathedral demonstration, and will be on top for this demonstration."

"I can't believe it. How in the world will I be able to protect you from all sides? Remember, these characters will not be throwing eggs and tomatoes. They are going to be using much more lethal objects."

"I understand your concern, and am grateful for your concern to protect me. However, you must understand that I am a newsman. I can't walk away and hide from something major, as this demonstration will certainly be. If it will make it easier for you, I will relieve you. It will be made perfectly clear to anyone and everyone, it was my decision and not yours."

"I can't just quit. I'm not a coward. I swore to do what is asked of me in the line of duty. I will do what is asked of me. Where you go, I go."

"Fine, now let us figure out how we can solve the problem."

Luhs thought a moment while moving side to side in his seat. "OK. Let's get you into the courthouse. Then I'll go out and scout around. Maybe I can get one of my buddies to let me have one of those protective shields. They use them in the demonstrations. The shield is a good protection in these cases."

The limo was a block away from the courthouse. Wall-to-wall people were behind the barricades. Many were in the white sheets and hoods. Others wore the skinheads uniform. As we got closer, the chants became more audible.

"Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven.
Four, five, six, seven
No Judas in Heaven."

"Luhs, I can see what you mean. We are going to be in a heap of trouble today. Louis, drive the car where Luhs tells you to go."

He just nodded. Luhs pointed out a spot, and then directed him toward the back of the courthouse. Barricades and police officers formed a clear path to the back entrance. Federal marshals were fully armed at the entrance door. As soon as we pulled up, Bos appeared.

"Mr. Sarto, am I glad to see you! I've got an earful to tell you."

Luhs interrupted, "Bos, take care of him. I got some work to do."

"I will. Take care of yourself. If you need me, go to the office. They'll get in touch."

"What's the big news, Bos?"

"You won't believe it when I tell you."

"After what I just heard, I'll believe anything."

"Mr. Sarto, something real big. I mean, real big, is going to happen. Besides the metal detectors at the entrance, they have set up metal detectors outside of seventeen-oh-five."

"What for?"

"The chief does not want to take any chances of anyone going into seventeen-oh-five with any weapons."

"Why the precaution?"

"There's a rumor going around. Judas will be the next witness. The chief doesn't want anyone taking any shots at anyone. You know what happened with the nutty newsman."

"Are you sure that Judas will be the next witness?"

"I'm not positive, but my man has always given me the right dope."

"What's the story with the demonstration outside?"

"The chief is quite concerned about that. He is talking with his bosses in D.C. about calling off the session today. He hopes the hearing can resume tomorrow, if the demonstration is over today."

Bos held up his hand a moment while he heard the message in his earphone.

"Mr. Sarto, no hearing today. You can go home now."

Just as he finished speaking, Luhs appeared. He looked out of breath and agitated. He had a plastic shield in his hand. "Mr. Sarto, the hearing is cancelled today."

"I know. Bos just now informed me."

"The demonstration is still on. Those characters are getting real nasty and feisty. I was able to get the shield. Do you want to get to the truck?"

"I sure do. Bos, do you know where Richard is?"

"I think he is in seventeen-oh-five. I'll fetch him, and send him to the truck."

"Thanks. I hope you are right about the next witness."

"I told you, my man always gives me the right dope."

"Let's go, Luhs, for I'm sure they are waiting for me in the truck."

**CHAPTER
XLIV
“AN UGLY BRAWL”**

Luhs led me down the steps to the truck. Bos walked in behind us. Since the steps were considered government property, his presence did not violate any jurisdiction. I went into the truck. Luhs remained outside. The producer told me everything was all set, and I was to go up on top when ready. A camera was in position for Richard to operate.

Richard showed up. He and I went up to survey the scene. As we got up on top, I looked out over the immense crowd stationed behind the barricades. The chant was now becoming more harsh and much louder.

“Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!
Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!”

Over and over they chanted. Then they took turns. First the KKK, then the skinheads. The CCC, which was a smaller group, made sure to chime in. I looked down and there was Luhs, poised on the door side of the truck. At the bottom of the steps, a second line of police were in position to back up the officers who were manning the barricades. All the officers had masks, in addition to their usual riot gear. Surely it smelled like trouble.

“Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!
Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!”

Louder and louder was their chant. No let-up; as one group would stop, another group would chime in.

“Testing one, two. Testing one, two.”

“Loud and clear. Post time when you want it.”

I glanced at Richard. He nodded. He was ready.

“Right now.”

Richard had me on camera as I motioned to him to scan the crowd.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I am Michael Sarto of WCS TV, coming to you live from the top of the WCS truck outside the courthouse. There will be no hearing today. It has been cancelled due to the possible disturbance outside the courthouse. A group of right-wing Christians have come to New York to demonstrate. The word is the demonstrators consist of members of the Ku Klux Klan, the skinheads and the CCC. They have been chanting for some time now. Let’s try to have you listen to the chant.”

“Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!
Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!”

Richard panned his camera back and forth over the crowd. I took a peek at Luhs. He was

swinging from side to side, as I wondered if he wanted to be with his former buddies on the police line.

"As you can see and hear, the demonstrators are trying their best to make their feelings known. They do not, I repeat, they do not want Judas in Heaven."

A rock came flying by the truck. The character who threw the rock had to be a quarterback on some football team. Luhs started to scream, "Mr. Sario, get behind that shield, damn it! More shit will be coming soon, real soon." Just as he finished, two more rocks and a bottle came whizzing through the air. I took Luhs' advice and was now standing behind the shield. I called to Richard to squeeze in with me. He declined the offer.

"Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!"
Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!"

The demonstrators wanted to get close to the courthouse. They began to surge forward. The police line backed up a bit and the barricades came tumbling down. It was the beginning of a very nasty situation. "Richard, keep the camera on the crowd." He nodded and did what I suggested. Luhs screamed, "Mr. Sario, it is going to explode soon. If they charge, get your ass into the truck."

"Ladies and gentlemen, the demonstrators have begun to resort to violence. While chanting,

they have begun to push forward and test the resolve of the police. The officers are holding their ground somewhat. The captain in charge has ordered the officers to put on their masks. He will not hesitate to use tear gas if the situation explodes into a full-scale riot."

"Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!"

Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!"

"Hold on, folks. Richard, get the camera on the group of the Ku Klux Klan. They have erected a cross and lit it. Oh Lord, what do we have on our hands today? Now, as you can hear, they are not only chanting, they are screaming the chant."

"Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!"

Four, five, six, seven,
No Judas in Heaven!"

"The officers are putting on the masks and drawing their batons. The captain is yelling out orders. The skinheads have broken through the right side. They are heading toward the police line. The cross is now in flames. The chanting is not subsiding. Shots are fired. Bang, bang, bang! Clouds of smoke envelope demonstrators. The police wade into the crowd. They are swinging at anything that is moving. One group of officers heads straight for the burning cross. Punches are being thrown at some officers. It is to no avail. Most of the demonstrators are blinded by the tear gas. Shots ring out in the crowd. An officer grabs

CHAPTER
XLV
“A RESPITE”

his arm as blood gushes from a bullet wound. The skinheads are trying to make a fight of it. The second line of the police bursts into them, and before you know it, the skinheads look the worse for wear. This spectacle is totally horrendous. It is worse than the demonstration at the cathedral.

Bodies of the demonstrators are strewn all over the ground. Paddy wagons begin to pull up. Officers have placed handcuffs on some of the demonstrators. They are literally thrown into wagons.”

Luhs was screaming, “It’s almost over. Thank God.”

However, like the time at the cathedral, I was sick to my stomach.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please forgive me. I must sign off now, as I am sick from the top of my head to the soles of my feet. This demonstration was a total disaster, to say the least. A real ugly brawl. Take care.”

The limo pulled up to the entrance of the apartment house. Most of the trip was accomplished in total silence. After Louis opened the rear door, I bid both Louis and Luhs a good night. Pete had the door opened and greeted me.

“Mr. Sarto, you did a great show, considering the circumstances.”

“Thanks, but I always have hated seeing people getting hurt. No matter how you twist and turn it, the demonstration was a debacle. Take care.”

When I arrived at my door, Rose was there to welcome me with open arms. She had a smile on her face. “It is so good to see you again. I see you had a most easy day,” while hugging me. “I see you are in a breaking balls frame of mind.”

“Who, me? No, you are mistaken. I am only here to ease your burden. Come in. Make yourself comfortable while I fetch you a glass of wine on ice.”

“Why are you acting this way?”

“How should I act? Should I be crestfallen and depressed? What would that solve? I know you had a most miserable day. Yes, the demonstration was a horror. What good would it do to dwell on it?”

"I guess you're right. It won't change anything. Truthfully, dwelling on it would only make it worse."

"Would you like the wine?"

"Sure. I'll freshen up a bit and hopefully relax a while," as I headed to the bedroom.

No sooner did I finish speaking than the phone rang. Rose answered, "Yes, who's speaking? Oh, it's you, Mr. Worthington," she called out his name to make sure I heard it.

"Yes, Mr. Worthington, Michael has just arrived home. I'll get him for you," as she handed me the phone.

"Yes, Mr. Worthington, how are you? Yes, I'm fine. I was quite disturbed over the demonstration today. Yes, I know I could do nothing to resolve it. Where are you, Mr. Worthington? I can hardly hear you over the loud background music. You say that you are having a few drinks. Well, please, Mr. Worthington, not too many. Remember your blood pressure. Did I hear what news today? You got a news flash on your private wire again?" Rose's ears went up like antennas. She came real close, trying to hear.

"What news did you receive? No, I really don't feel like guessing now. I've had too rough a day."

Rose's ear was really on the phone now. She practically shoved me aside.

"Hold on, Mr. Worthington."

Rose backed off a bit. She really wanted to hear the news.

"Sorry, Mr. Worthington. What were you saying about that news flash?"

Women were laughing in the background, and Worthington was trying to quiet them.

"What are you saying? Judas Iscariot will be the next witness? Are you kidding? No, I know you don't kid about important news items. Has the news about Judas being the next witness gone out on the news services yet?"

Rose's eyes opened to the size of silver dollars when she heard the news.

"You don't know for sure if the AP has the item? I'm sure we'll find out soon enough. Do you think we should run a ribbon or an announcement on the station? We don't want to be left behind if the other networks break the news."

Rose was shaking her head in the affirmative.

"OK, Mr. Worthington. I'll take care of it as soon as I get off the phone with you. Thanks for giving me the news. Yes, take care. Talk to you soon. Don't forget to keep track of the scotches."

"Do you think it is true or was the alcoholic

just telling you some cock-and-bull story?"

"No, it's definitely true. The news flash confirms it. Bos told me about it this morning before the demonstration. He told me a friend of his gave him the dope, and his friend always gave him the right dope. Let me get down to work, prepare a news flash and get the station to run it. You don't want it to seem as though I was sleeping, do you? This is too important a news flash. I'm positive

Jennings, Rather and Brokow have also been alerted."

"No peace, right? I thought you would be able to relax tonight and take it easy."

"There'll be enough time to relax when I'm in the box, six feet under."

"Michael, sometimes you say the dumbest things."

"I can't always be brilliant. Right?"

"PREP FOR A KEY DAY"

CHAPTER XLVI

I was down in the lobby at seven-thirty sharp. Luhs and Louis were waiting for me to show up. Pete ran to open the door as soon as he saw my face. After quick greetings, we entered the limo and we were on our way. This was going to be a day which certainly would be etched in history. Judas Iscariot was being called as a witness. He would be expected to tell his side of the story. Since word leaked out last night, nothing else was on television or radio.

People from all walks of life were voicing opinions. Some said he was crazy to testify. Others said he had nothing to lose. He was in Hell already. The worst that could happen was that he'd have to go back to Hell. If he won, then Judas hit the jackpot; Heaven awaited. It is very easy to render opinions when it isn't your ass on the line.

Would the ones who rendered opinions do the same if they were in Judas' shoes? I found that to be a very interesting thought. Larry King had four top lawyers on his telecast last night. Two of them said they would put Judas on the stand. Two said they would not put Judas on the stand. Even Rose said Judas was nuts to take the stand. She felt the case was going in Judas' favor. He might really hang himself a second time. She kept on insisting he had nothing to gain.

Luhs had the morning papers in his hands. He turned to show me the headlines. One paper had.

"Judas On Stand."

The other had,
"Judas Testifies."

There was nothing else. The editors of those two papers felt the headline was sufficient for people to buy the paper. I think they were one hundred percent correct.

Luhs started the conversation. "Mr. Sarto, what do you think will happen in that courtroom?"

"At this minute, I can't really tell you."

Rose's words came up from before, "Do not render opinions."

"My captain called me last night to make sure I was on full alert. He also called the other officers who are guarding the anchormen. They expect a mob of people today. They are not sure if any more demonstrators will show up. All officers in the vicinity will be in riot gear."

"I'm glad the precautions are being taken after what happened yesterday."

The traffic was moving quite slowly as we got closer to the courthouse.

"Are we going into the courthouse the same way as yesterday?"

"Yes, we are. No chances are to be taken. Bos will meet us at the back entrance." He then ordered Louis, "The same way. Just get behind the barricades and head for the building."

Louis said nothing as he kept on driving. We finally arrived, and Bos was there as the limo pulled up. Armed marshals stood guard outside the entrance.

"Mr. Sarto, happy to see you safe and sound. I'm sure you heard the big news." He made a face as though to say to me, "I told you so."

"Yes, you were right, and I'll promise you one thing. I'll never doubt you again. Whatever you say, I'll take it as gospel."

I turned to Luhs. "Be careful, because I don't want anything happening to you today."

"Don't worry. I'll be fine. Just do a good show, and I'll be here when you are finished. See you."

"Mr. Sarto, let's get you upstairs. This place is a total madhouse. Besides the marshals, the Secret Service men are on the grounds. I think the Vice President is showing up again. It won't shock me if the President himself shows up. It seems the whole country and the world has been caught up in this Judas frenzy."

"You know what? Remind me to ask the CEO of WCS to give you an anchorman's position. I could not have explained it any better. You called a spade a spade, and a diamond a diamond. You constantly amaze me. Is Richard here yet?"

"He sure is. This way, just follow me."

We took the world tour route through the maze of people. Sure enough, we were outside of 1705. Yes, as Bos said yesterday, metal detectors were in front of the entrance. Everyone had to go

CHAPTER
XLVI I
“JUDAS TESTIFIES”
Part I

through before they entered the courtroom. Not I, because I was with Bos. His smile was the only thing needed. The two marshals waved us in. Not one space or seat was to be found, except two places behind Dante's seat.

“Are those two seats for the Vice President?”

“I'm pretty sure. He is to arrive just before the hearing begins. This way there won't be any problem getting through spectators.”

“Smart idea. Does your boss stay up all night trying to figure out precautions?”

“Not him. He has it all down to a science. The man knows what he is doing all the time.”

“See you later, Bos. Again thanks for everything.”

“No need. Just do a good show. I'll be right outside waiting for you.”

The time was about ten minutes to nine. My gear was in place, and I had already checked in. While awaiting word from the producer to go on, I noticed a mumbling among the spectators. They had turned toward the entrance. The Vice President walked into the courtroom with his Secret Service contingent. He went directly to the two empty seals. One of the Secret Service men sat alongside of him. One of the others asked a spectator to vacate his seat behind the Vice President. The spectator was allowed to sit on a chair at the end of the aisle. This way, the Vice President was protected from behind. Judas, Calvin and Dante entered, and went directly to their respective seats.

“Post time in two minutes and counting.”

Richard looked ready as always. I sipped some water and took a deep breath, for I too was ready for this momentous day.

“Post time.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV, on live at the federal courthouse in New York City. Today will probably be a day of days in your life, as it is in mine. As you know by now, Judas Iscariot will be called to testify in his own behalf. Judas is expected to be called as a witness when this hearing begins in a

few moments. The Vice President has already arrived. This is his second visit to the proceedings. Utmost security measures have been put in place. Metal detectors have also been placed at the entrance of the courtroom. No chances are being taken. Nor one empty place is available in the courtroom, as you can see. The tension is literally stifling...so thick, it can be cut with a knife. The court deputy is approaching the microphone. Let's listen."

"Please rise, the *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session."

"Here they come. The panel of judges, led by Solomon, have entered. They will head to their seats."

Once seated, Solomon began. "Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Advocate Calvin, will you please have the court deputy call your witness?"

Calvin handed a slip of paper to the court deputy, who in turn announced over the microphone, "Judas Iscariot, come forth."

All the spectators stood as Judas rose and followed the court deputy to the witness chair. Solomon banged on the gavel. "Please be seated, or I will be forced to clear the courtroom. I will not allow any type of demonstration to take place."

The spectators immediately sat for fear of being thrown out.

Solomon turned to Calvin. "Advocate Calvin, are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes, I am ready. However, I also would like to make a request to the Court. May I do so?"

"Yes, you may."

I just knew and felt Calvin was going to reach into his bag of tricks and cause a major disruption. All the spectators edged forward. They did not want to miss one word.

"Honorable Judges, as you now know, I have asked my client, Judas Iscariot, to testify on his own behalf. I find it absolutely necessary for my client to receive a fair and impartial hearing. An important individual should be summoned to testify as a witness."

Impossible to believe what I was hearing. Almost nobody in the courtroom, or in the television audience, believed it, either.

Solomon asked, "Advocate Calvin, who do you wish to be summoned as a witness?"

"I ask that Jesus Christ Himself be summoned to testify."

The courtroom exploded. It can't be, I said to myself. Solomon was banging away with his gavel. The spectators just kept on reacting. Sounds of no! no! were heard. Solomon entreated for silence. The silence arrived after a few noisy minutes.

"Advocate Calvin, as you can easily see and hear, your request has caused an impact of tremendous importance on this hearing. Your request has been heard by myself and the panel of judges. I will not be able to give you an answer at this moment. The judges' panel will take your

request under advisement. After your client has finished with his testimony, the judges' panel will announce our decision. I understand your position, and I also promise you that the judges' panel will discuss all aspects of your extraordinary request."

"Thank you, Judge Solomon, and also thanks to the panel of judges."

No words could match what was on display in the courtroom. If there was tension before this day began, then it just intensified at least ten times over. Richard just was shaking his head. He could not believe what was happening, either.

"Advocate Calvin, please proceed with your witness."

Judas sat patiently in the chair. He was not showing any bit of emotion. He was just waiting for his advocate to come over to him and begin the interrogation. Surprisingly, his demeanor was to be admired. I felt certain the interrogation was going to be most thorough, if not by Calvin, certainly by Dante, when it was his turn.

The newspaper people had their notebooks and pens out. They were ready to make their notes. They did not want to report anything which was not accurate.

The analyst panel also appeared to be quite intent with the proceedings. They had been making some notes when Calvin made his unusual request.

Dante had his eyes trained on Judas, in the witness chair.

Calvin came close to Judas and spoke softly. "Please tell the court your name."

"My name is Judas Iscariot."

"Were you known by any other name?"

"At one time, I was known as Judas, the Apostle."

"Were you an Apostle of Jesus Christ at one time?"

"Yes, I was."

Judas answered the questions of Calvin in a soft monotone.

"Will you tell the court how you became an Apostle and who chose you?"

"I became an Apostle when Jesus Christ asked me to follow Him. I was one of the twelve that He chose."

"Were the other Apostles chosen in the same manner?"

"Yes, they were. The ones whom He wanted were asked by Him to follow. They did."

"Did you have any misgivings about becoming a follower or an Apostle of Jesus Christ?"

"No, I did not. At the time I was chosen I felt it was something I had to do. I really cannot explain the feeling. It was something from deep within me. I felt I had to just drop everything I was doing, and go with Jesus Christ."

"In your early days with Jesus Christ, did you have any misgivings?"

"I'm not positive I understand your question completely. Will you please attempt to explain the question?"

"I am asking you, did you have any doubts in the early years with Jesus Christ, that you made an error by becoming an Apostle?"

"I do not believe that I did. However, I always had a feeling that I was placed into the group of Apostles. At times I felt that I did not fit in with them."

"Can you explain your answer?"

"It is almost impossible to explain. It was a deep innate feeling. Yes, I was one of the Apostles and I spent three years with them. However, I knew deep down that I was not supposed to be a part of the group."

Eyebrows were raised everywhere.

Newspaper people made sure to put the words of Judas on their notepads. The analysts also were making notes. I looked at Richard and he returned my gaze.

"Why did you think you did not belong?"

"As I have mentioned, it is very difficult to convey my feelings. I felt I was there with the Apostles, but I was not there as one of them. I always had the feeling and thought that I was to do what they were not supposed to do."

"I will explore your last statement a little later. Now, I would like to cover some other matters. Did you get along well with the other Apostles?"

"I believe I did. I was elected by them to be in charge of the money for the group."

"Did you ever use the Apostles' money for your own use?"

"I did not."

"Did you exclaim that the money which was spent for the ointment could have been put to better use?"

"Yes, I did. I felt it could have been spent for food, to feed the hungry."

"Did Jesus Christ reprimand you for what you said?"

"Yes, He did. He made me understand that there would always be poor and hungry. It was a problem that would never be solved on Planet Earth."

"Did you hear the testimony of John the Evangelist?"

"Yes, I did."

"Do you recall that he called you a thief?"

"Yes. It was his opinion, and perhaps only his. True, he was close to Jesus Christ. He did not want anyone jeopardizing his position. In a way he was jealous. Please remember, all of the Apostles had perty grievances. Sometimes the jealousies came to the forefront. It might be the reason why Jesus Christ constantly reminded us to love one another."

"During the years which you spent with Jesus Christ, did you believe everything that was said?"

"Please understand that Jesus Christ would many times speak in parables. At times people could have understood one thing, but something else was meant. Yes, sometimes I would understand the kingdom to be here on Planet Earth,

Very late, I found out the kingdom was not on Planet Earth, but in Heaven."

"When did you make the decision to go to the high priest to deliver Jesus Christ to him?"

The courtroom went into complete silence when Calvin finished asking the question. No sound was heard. Judas twisted in the chair from side to side. He did not look up. His gaze was on the floor in front of him.

"I, personally, did not make the decision to go to the high priest."

"If you did not make the decision, who did?"

"I cannot answer your question. I only know one fact. When I did go to the high priest, I felt I was possessed by an outside *spirit*. Yes, my body was there. Yes, I did the talking. However, it was not Judas Iscariot, it was an outside *spirit*."

"Do you remember any of the conversation with the high priest?"

"Yes, I know he was looking to arrest Jesus Christ."

Calvin interrupted, "How did you know he was looking to arrest Jesus Christ?"

"There were rumors around. In addition, Jesus Christ was saying that He would be leaving soon. Also, He said one of the Twelve would betray Him."

"Did you feel He was talking about you?"

"At first I did not. Then, when this *spirit* took over, I just went ahead with what I did."

"What did the high priest promise, when you approached him?"

"I was promised a reward for the deliverance."

"Did you go back to the Apostles after you had met with the high priest?"

"Yes, we were gathered in this room for the Feast of the Passover."

"Then what happened?"

"Jesus Christ again repeated that one of the Twelve would betray Him."

"Did you say anything?"

"Yes, I asked, 'Is it I?' He dipped into the sauce and gave it to me. Then He said to go do what I was to do."

"Did you leave?"

"Yes, I did. I went to the high priest and told him where Jesus Christ could be found."

"How did you know where Jesus Christ could be found?"

"That is it. I did not know, when I was in the Passover room, that Jesus would go to the Garden of Agony. I was guided to the garden by the *spirit*. I guided the high priest's delegation to where Jesus had been praying, went up to Jesus and kissed Him, saying 'Hail, Rabbi.'

"Jesus replied, '*For what purpose hast thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*' The group proceeded to arrest Jesus Christ."

Everyone could see Judas was having difficulty. Calvin turned to Solomon. "I would like to request a recess. I would like to resume after the recess."

"Your request has been granted. The hearing will resume in one hour."

The judges got up and filed out. Calvin led Judas out. Dante and the analysts followed. About the spectators in the courtroom? They were dumbfounded. Hardly anyone could possibly believe what they had just heard.

"Ladies and gentlemen. It is best to just sign off. Let's contemplate by ourselves this morning's testimony. One hour. Take care."

CHAPTER XLVIII "DISCUSSION"

"Your request has been granted. The hearing will resume in one hour."

The judges got up and filed out. Calvin led Judas out. Dante and the analysts followed. About the spectators in the courtroom? They were dumbfounded. Hardly anyone could possibly believe what they had just heard.

After the session with Judas on the stand, I had to back up a few moments. His testimony was most chilling. Richard asked me if I wanted anything from the cafeteria. I asked him to bring some hot tea back, if he did not mind. Richard joined Bos and both of them went on to get some refreshments. While sitting there and going over the testimony in my head, I realized that I had to discuss the various points with someone. Rose was the one, and I dialed home.

"Hi, G.T. How are you?"

"Michael, is something wrong?"

"No, not really. I need to talk to someone, and you won the jackpot."

"Gee, thanks. I never knew how lucky I am! What's happening? What's bugging you?"
 "Did you see this morning's hearing?"
 "I sure did. I would not have missed it for anything."

"What did you think of it?"

"You will not believe what I'm going to tell you. Calvin has stolen the entire thunder in this hearing. In a very smooth and subtle manner, he has taken complete charge by asking the judges to summon Jesus Christ. He struck a brilliant blow for his client."

"Rose, stop a moment. There is a point which I am finding to be very disturbing. It is one of the reasons why I called you."

"Well, what is it?"

"Just listen for a minute and let what I'm going to tell you sink in. Then give me your answer. Calvin has asked for Jesus Christ to come to the hearing as a witness. The Christians, Moslems and other religious groups believe that when Jesus Christ returns to Planet Earth again, it is the end of the world, Judgment Day. If the judges do bring Jesus Christ to be a witness, will that be the way for the Second Coming and Armageddon?"

"Oh Lord, Michael. I did not realize what you are saying could be true. If it is so, there would be total chaos in the entire world. How I wish I had an answer to your question. At this point only Almighty God has the answer."

"What did you think of Judas' testimony?"

"Calvin is doing a superb job in his interrogation. Judas is being led and is revealing to the court some very important aspects. Two points immediately come to my mind. Point one is that Judas revealed that he felt he was being taken over by a *spirit*. However, the second point, and it is a major point, is Judas' revelation that he was not in the room during and after the Last Supper. As a result, he could not have possibly known where Jesus Christ would go to pray. Therefore it is very logical to assume the guidance by an outside *spirit* to the garden, so Jesus could be found. This last

point will cause millions of people to step back and give it an immense amount of thought."

"What do you think of Calvin asking for a recess?"

"Another brilliant move on his part. He wanted the early testimony to sink into everyone's mind. He succeeded in doing so. As proof of it, you and I are discussing the testimony right now."

"Rose, I knew I could count on you. Must go now. Time is quickly approaching. Thanks. Love you. See you later."

**CHAPTER
XLIX
“JUDAS TESTIFIES”
*Part II***

Richard brought back the tea and he went right to his camera. As I was sipping the tea, he asked me what I thought would happen next. I shook my head as if to say I did not know, as I put on my gear and checked in. “Testing one, two. Testing one, two.”

“Loud and clear. Post time in two minutes and counting.”

The courtroom was packed again. The Vice President also returned to hear the next session. I would doubt if anyone would want to miss this upcoming session.

“Post time,” just as Judas and Calvin took their seats.

“Ladies and gentlemen. I’m Michael Sarto of WCS, on live for the next session of the *Judas On Appeal* hearing. It commences in a few moments. The court deputy has reached the microphone. Let’s listen.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is in session.”

The Solomon parade appeared, and they took their positions.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Advocate Calvin, please have your witness take the witness chair and proceed.”

Calvin motioned to Judas, and he went to the chair. Calvin seemed to be very confident as he approached Judas. “Are you ready to continue where we left off?”

“Yes, I am.”

“We had left off in the early session that Jesus Christ was arrested after you kissed Him. Is that correct?”

“Yes, it is.”

“You also testified that you did not know that Jesus Christ would go to the garden to pray. Is that correct?”

“Yes, it is.”

“You also testified that you felt a *spirit* guided you to where Jesus Christ was praying. Is that correct?”

“Yes, it is.”

“Is it possible for you to identify this *spirit*? ”

“No, it is not possible.”

“Why is it not possible? ”

“I cannot truly say if it was Lucifer. Also, I cannot say if the *spirit* was directed by Almighty God.”

The courtroom exploded with “What did he say? Is he crazy? He has to be crazy!”

Solomon was banging his gavel while seeking silence. Judas sat and did not flinch a muscle.

Calvin asked, “Please allow me to understand what you have just testified. Will you repeat it? ”

EXHIBIT 1
Part 4
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

"Yes. I said I cannot truly say if it was Lucifer who influenced me. Also, I cannot say if the spirit who took over me was directed by God Almighty."

"What makes you believe what you have testified?"

"I believe it because one or the other had to be involved. If it was Lucifer, then he did it because he wanted to embarrass Jesus Christ. If it was Almighty God who directed the *spirit*, then it was for the fulfillment of the Scriptures."

"Will you please explain the second possibility of your presumption?"

"Yes, I will explain. We have heard in this courtroom the testimony of the two prophets, Zacharias and David. They both testified that Messias would come to Planet Earth. They also testified that one of His followers would betray Him. The prophecies were made centuries before. If I did not do what I did, the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled. The redemption would not have been completed as per the Scriptures."

Gasps were heard throughout the courtroom. Solomon banged away, time after time. He was having a difficult time pleading for silence. The blood just drained from my face. Judas just accused God Almighty of being a participant in a conspiracy. The courtroom once again became quiet.

Solomon ordered, "Advocate Calvin, please proceed."

"Judas, please tell the court what you did after the arrest of Jesus Christ."

"I walked around. I did not really know where to go. I went to where the Sanhedrin held their meetings, and found they were holding a meeting. When I walked into the room, a servant handed me my reward consisting of thirty pieces of silver. I placed the reward money into my pocket and walked out, feeling completely disgusted with myself. When I found out that Jesus Christ was to be crucified, I went back to the Sanhedrin and cried out, 'I have betrayed innocent blood.' I took the reward money, flung it on the floor, and rushed out."

"What did you do after you rushed out?"

"I was completely beside myself."

The courtroom became deathly silent.

Hardly anyone took a breath as they anticipated the answer.

"I was filled with total remorse. I did not want to do what I did. I knew the *spirit* was dragging me down the road of self-destruction. I figured if I killed myself, I might also kill the *spirit* who was in possession of me. I found a tree which was alongside a cliff, tied a noose around my neck, and flung it over a branch of the tree. While hanging, the branch broke, and I crashed down to my death. At that moment, I also fulfilled a portion of the Scriptures."

A few gasps were heard when the courtroom heard of Judas' suicide.

**CHAPTER
L
“DISCUSSION PART II”**

“Is that why you testified earlier that the other Apostles were not to do what you would do?”
 “Yes, they had to do the work of Jesus Christ on Planet Earth. I was to do the work of helping to fulfill the Scriptures.”
 “Is it also the reason why you felt you were not part of the group?”
 “Yes, it was.”

“Why do you believe you were chosen to be an Apostle and spend three years with Him?”
 “I was chosen because I had to do what I eventually did. By being chosen and being in Jesus Christ’s company, I was always within reach. I was an integral part of the crucifixion and redemption.”
 “With what you have testified here today, would you say that you were predestined?”
 “Without a doubt, I was predestined.”

“No further questions.”

I expected the courtroom to explode in a roar of some kind. Instead, there was total silence. Solomon announced, “The hearing is in recess until this afternoon.” The judges paraded out.

I was stirring and I knew I must say something. Richard had the camera on me.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Judas Iscariot’s testimony has been mindblowing. It is almost impossible to describe the impact of his testimony. We will have to wait until this afternoon’s session before I can comment. I promise also to hear what the analyst panel has to say. Until then, take care.”
 Richard cut. I took a deep breath of relief.

As soon as the session was finished, the spectators were milling around commenting on the testimony of Judas. Richard asked me to join Bos and him for lunch. I figured I had to put the Judas testimony into proper perspective. I asked him if he would mind bringing back a ham and cheese sandwich and some tea. He answered, “No Problem.” Off he went with Bos, as I dialed home.
 “Hi, G.T. How are you?”
 “The G.T. is feeling marvelous. Do you have some sort of problem, may I ask?”
 “I see you are in your G.T. frame of mind.”
 “How did you arrive at your momentous decision?”
 “Quite simple. Your tone of voice gave you away,” I answered, laughing.
 “You know, someday you will pay.”
 “What difference will that make? One good day more, or one day less, will not make a bit of difference to Rome.”
 We both laughed.
 “Rose, what did you think of Judas’ second session?”
 “Explosive and disruptive are the two best descriptions of his testimony. When he spoke of the spirit being either from Lucifer or from God Almighty, a valid question arose. Both Lucifer and

God Almighty had a legitimate and valid stake in the betrayal. Judas pointed out that Lucifer always had a desire to embarrass Jesus Christ. God Almighty needed the betrayal for the fulfillment of the Scriptures."

"Who do you think orchestrated the spirit?"

"I can't honestly tell you. If a gun were put to my head and I had to choose between the two, my choice would be Almighty God."

"Why Almighty God?"

"Almighty God had more to lose if the betrayal was not completed. The betrayal was an integral part of the Scriptures."

"When Judas described the reward and his suicide, did you feel it made an impact?"

"It certainly did. Please note that one of the main reasons why his soul resides in Hell is because he committed suicide. Suicide is a complete no-no in the Christian religion."

"If Dante questions Judas, do you think the suicide will be a focal point?"

"Without a doubt it will be. Dante, being a stickler about the church, will probably hammer away with full force about the suicide."

"Did Judas give a valid answer as to why he was chosen to be an Apostle?"

"I would tend to believe he did. Since the prophecies were of a follower committing the betrayal, it was imperative for someone in the Jesus group to do it. I don't think an outsider would have fit the bill."

"G.T., you certainly solidified the key points of his testimony. I will see if the analyst panel concurs with your views. Will you be watching the afternoon session?"

"I'm staying put. I can't wait to see Dante in action."

"Very well, thanks and take care. I'll see you later."

CHAPTER
LI
“JUDAS TESTIFIES”
Part III

Richard returned from lunch and did in fact return with the sandwich and tea. I thanked him for his trouble and he responded, “No problem.” He

began to ready his camera for the afternoon session while I began eating my lunch. He took me a little off-guard when he remarked, “Do you believe this afternoon’s session will blow everyone’s mind?”

“Why do you say that?”

“Well, Dante has been fairly quiet lately. I don’t believe being quiet is his style. So he has to mount some sort of barrage to get back the ground he has lost to Calvin.”

“You are right on target. He has to do some fierce interrogation of Judas. If he doesn’t, then Judas will be sitting right outside of the gates leading to Heaven.”

After arranging my gear, I began to test:

“Testing one, two. Testing one, two.”

“Loud and clear. Two minutes to post time and counting.”

The court deputy started walking to the microphone. I motioned for Richard to put me on camera.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’m Michael Sario of WCS. The afternoon session will begin in a few moments. The court deputy is about to speak.”

“Post time.”

“Let us hear the court deputy.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session.”

Solomon and his group appeared at the open door. They proceeded to take their seats. Solomon announced, “Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Judas Iscariot, please take a seat in the witness chair.”

Judas did as ordered.

“Advocate Dante, do you wish to question the witness?”

“Without a doubt, I wish to question.”

“Please proceed without further delay.”

Dante looked as though he was sizing up his prey. He took measured steps as he approached Judas.

“You are Judas Iscariot, are you not?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Were you at one time also known as Judas the Apostle?”

“I have testified yes to your question before. Why are you asking me again?”

“I only want to be positive that you are the true Judas.”

Calvin jumped in, “I object to the advocate’s line of questioning.”

Solomon responded, “Objection overruled. Please proceed.”

Calvin’s face reflected complete disgust.

“Are you the Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus Christ?”

"Yes, I am."

"Do you know that you are widely regarded as one of the most infamous figures that ever walked on Planet Earth?"

"I really cannot answer your question. I am not able to judge how popular or unpopular I am."

"Did you know that no mother names her child *Judas* any longer?"

"I do not keep any records to indicate whether mothers do, or do not, name their children *Judas*."

"When Jesus Christ chose you to be a follower, did you feel elated?"

"In the beginning I was. But as time went on I felt something was amiss."

"What did you feel was wrong?"

"I testified that I was part of the group, but I really did not belong."

"If you felt that you did not belong, why did you not leave?"

"I really cannot answer your question. Even though I was troubled, I remained."

"John the Evangelist called you a thief in his testimony. It would appear that he was not too fond of you."

"John was very close to Jesus Christ. However, Jesus Christ constantly admonished us to love one another. John did not practice that rule too readily. I deny vehemently the accusation. I managed the Apostles' money. I did not use any of the money for personal use."

"When Jesus Christ spoke of the Kingdom, what did you believe the Kingdom would be?"

"At first I thought the Kingdom would be on Planet Earth. It would be the breaking of the yoke which was placed on us by Rome. We would be a free people, no longer under the domination of Rome."

"Did you personally hate the Romans?"

"As a Jew, I hated the Romans. When Jesus Christ preached of loving my fellow man, I began to change my views."

"Did you also believe that when the Kingdom arrived on Planet Earth, the Apostles would have special advantages?"

"Yes, I did. I became disillusioned when I realized the Kingdom was not to be on Planet Earth."

"When your realization came to be, was that the time you decided to go to the high priest?"

"I want to repeat what I testified earlier. Yes, my body went to the high priest. My voice spoke, but it was not Judas Iscariot."

"Who was it then?"

"It was some *spirit*."

"You mean to say, out of the clear blue sky, some *spirit* took over your body and mind and carried you to the high priest?"

"I know you do not believe it, but what you are saying is true."

"Are you attempting to insult the intelligence of the court, and all in this courtroom, by saying a *spirit* invaded your mind and body?"

"I am not attempting to insult anyone. I am telling you certain facts. I am not forcing you to believe the facts."

"When you went to the high priest and promised to deliver Jesus Christ to them, a reward was offered. True?"

"Yes, it was."

"Was the amount of the reward revealed to you?"

"No, it was not."

"After Jesus Christ was arrested, why did you go back to receive the reward?"

"My body went back, guided by the *spirit*."

"After you accepted the reward, did you find out that Jesus Christ was to be crucified?"

"Yes, and I became completely remorseful."

"When you became remorseful, did you or did you not have control of your mind?"

"I did not have complete control."

"How were you able to tell whether you did or not?"

"I really could not tell. I know I was in a state of despair."

"At that point, did you or your so-called *spirit* know you had committed a grievous wrong against Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I did."

"Knowing that you did, and knowing that Jesus Christ always preached forgiveness, why did you not go to Him and seek forgiveness?"

"I felt I was beyond the point of forgiveness."

"Is that why you chose the route of suicide?"

"I chose the route of suicide because, by my own death, I would also cause the death of the *spirit* that had invaded my being."

"Don't you know that there is no forgiveness for the mortal sin of suicide?"

"Yes, I do."

"Do you know the punishment for dying in the state of mortal sin is Hell?"

"Yes, I do."

"Since you have answered yes to my last question and you admitted to committing suicide, what makes you believe that you should be granted entrance into Heaven by this panel of judges?"

Judas looked at Calvin and then looked at the panel of judges. Lastly, he fixed his gaze at Dante.

"Advocate Dante, I feel I should be allowed to enter Heaven for one reason and one reason alone. I was predestined. I was born on Planet Earth to do a certain act, which was to become an Apostle and betray Jesus Christ. I did what I was to do. I fulfilled the Scriptures of Zacharias and David. I should be rewarded with entrance into Heaven. I should not be punished by being placed in Hell. If I did not do what I did, there would be a flaw in the redemption of mankind. Almighty God would never allow a flaw where it concerned Jesus Christ. I repeat, I was predestined. I should be allowed to be in Heaven."

Dante appeared to be in a daze after hearing Judas' last remarks. He could only say, "No further questions."

"This session is concluded. The panel of judges will make an important announcement in one hour." All the judges departed.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot say one word at this moment. Please forgive me. Let's sign off for now. WCS will be back on in one hour for the announcement. Take care."

Richard cut and I just sat there feeling like I had completed fifteen rounds in a boxing match. I was totally exhausted. The analyst panel was to be contacted. However, it was best to do so after the judges' announcement. Richard and I did not have a clue what the announcement would be.

CHAPTER LII "POSSIBLE PANIC"

The last hour flew by. I sat in the booth contemplating the testimony of Judas. He seemed to have held up well under the grueling ordeal. As a matter of fact, I thought he had scored some major points in his favor while being questioned by Dante.

Richard was getting ready as I put on my gear and checked in. "Testing one, two. Testing one, two."

"All set. Post time in two minutes and counting."

Very few spectators had left the courtroom. I'm sure they did not want to miss the announcement which Solomon was about to proclaim. The atmosphere in the courtroom showed apprehension. I was surprised in a way. The Vice President did not return. Perhaps he figured he would find out, one way or another. The court deputy headed for the microphone.

"Post time."

"Ladies and gentlemen, Michael Sarto here for WCS. We are on live to hear the announcement which Solomon will make. The court deputy is at the microphone to begin the session. Let's listen."

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session."

The judges appeared and followed Solomon to their seats.

Solomon spoke, "Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. At the conclusion of the previous session, I said that an announcement would be made. However, before I do make the announcement, there are certain conditions which must be agreed to. I am now speaking directly to both advocates. Advocate Calvin has asked the panel of judges to summon Jesus Christ to be a witness. The panel has taken his request under serious consideration, and has decided that first this condition must apply."

Most of the spectators had intense expressions on their faces. Silence was golden.

"The condition for the judges to summon Jesus Christ is this: Both advocates must agree that the questioning of Jesus Christ, as a witness, will be done only by the judges of this panel. I will act as moderator. The judges who desire to question, will do so. At the conclusion of the judges' questioning, if either of the advocates wishes to ask additional questions, they will be allowed to pass the questions to me. I will ask the witness the questions which the advocate presented."

I felt this was the first minor shock. I was waiting for the actual blast to erupt.

"Do the advocates understand completely the rules which have been laid out? Advocate Calvin, do you agree to the regulations?"

"Yes, I do."

"Advocate Dane, do you agree to the regulations?"

"First, I must say that I am not completely pleased with the regulations. However, to expedite this hearing, I will agree."

"I thank you both. Now, I will make this proclamation for the judges panel of the World Court of Religion. Jesus Christ has been summoned by the World Court of Religion to be a witness at the *Judas On Appeal* hearing. Jesus Christ will be the first witness on Monday morning when the hearing resumes."

The response was explosive. Spectators appeared as though they were hit by a one-two punch. They probably did not believe what they had just heard.

Solomon banged his gavel. "Please be quiet. I have not finished as yet." What else can he add, I thought. Richard now had Solomon front and center.

"I must also make this statement to all in the courtroom, and to one and all who hear and see these proceedings."

Watch out, here comes the aftershock.

"The statement I wish to make is the following: As all know, whatever religion one practices, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is written in the Scriptures as the time on Planet Earth to be known as Judgment Day. I want the facts to be made perfectly clear. Advocate Calvin has requested Jesus Christ to appear as a witness on Planet Earth. Jesus Christ has agreed to appear as a witness on Planet Earth. Is this the manner chosen for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? I can only

CHAPTER
LIII
“PANIC TAKES OVER”

answer the questions, in all honesty, one way. I really do not know. I do not have the answer to that question. Since it has been decided, everything is in place. This session is now concluded. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing will resume at nine o’clock Monday morning.”

The judges all rose and filed out. The participants all followed the judges. The rest of us were left in a complete quandary. As I looked around the courtroom, and as Richard scanned with his camera, panic started to show on the spectators’ faces. Just what I had discussed with Rose might turn out to be true. I had to go on live. I had no choice.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I know it is very difficult to be calm. The last statement of Solomon has cut through any layers of smugness that one could have. If it is true that the Second Coming is about to become a reality, there is only one thing that you should do. Go make peace with God Almighty, and pray for the best. If you panic and begin to rant, rave and rebel, it will not make one bit of difference. If the end has arrived, nothing can possibly be done. Hopefully, I will be back on Monday at nine. Take care.”

As soon as I came out of the booth, Bos was in my face. “Mr. Sarto, do you think it’s true?” “What’s true?”

“You know, man, what Solomon just said in that courtroom.”

“You mean the Second Coming of Christ, Judgment Day?”

“Yeah, that’s it.”

“Bos, let me tell you something. I’m in the same boat as you. As a matter of fact, we all are. Every single human being on Planet Earth is in the same boat.”

“What are we supposed to do?”

“The best thing you, me, and anybody else should do between now and Monday morning, is to try and make peace with Almighty God. Then whatever will be, will definitely be.”

“I don’t know. I really don’t know.”

“Bos, don’t feel bad. I do not believe anyone on Planet Earth can give the right answer. Just remember one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“You still have time until Monday morning to make peace. After that, who knows?” “I’ll try to see it your way, but it’s not easy.”

"Nothing's easy. I must get going. Hopefully I'll see you Monday morning. Take care."

"You too, Mr. Sarto. I might just do what you suggested."

When I arrived at the lobby door, Luhs also looked a little pale. He tried to smile, but he was not succeeding.

"Mr. Sarto, are we in trouble?"

"As I just told Bos, we are in a peck of trouble." We started to walk toward the limo. Louis had the back door open, and he didn't look too happy either.

"Boys, I think we should all get ourselves home and try to meditate on the best road for each of us to take. Moaning and weeping will not change the picture any."

"But do you really guess it will be Judgment Day?"

"Luhs, I really don't know. And I don't feel like guessing. If it is, the die is cast. There will be no turning back."

"You're right. There won't be any turning back."

Louis just drove. His face displayed complete exasperation. He did not seem to have the stomach to talk, especially when he heard the conversation that Luhs and I were having. As we were driving home, I noticed an extraordinary number of people rushing about. It seemed to me they were in a great hurry to get someplace. I thought it was extremely strange. As we passed

various churches, there were more people than usual outside of each church. Maybe some people were making a jump-start to get their desk in order before Monday morning.

"Here we are, Mr. Sarto."

"Thanks, Louis. Now, you two boys get home safely. Take care. God willing, I'll see you Monday morning."

Pete ran out to open the limo door. His face was ashen.

"I know, Pete. It's not an easy scene we are facing. Just do what you feel you must do."

"You're right. What is going to be, will be."

I arrived on my floor, and as I exited the elevator, Rose was waiting. Her face wasn't too happy either.

"Oh Michael, do you think that's it?"

"What's it, Rose?"

"Don't break chops this minute. You know damn well what I'm referring to."

"Do you see a crystal ball in my hands? I'm not a prophet. Do you really want me to predict the future? Do I believe that Jesus coming down to be a witness is the Second Coming? Remember we discussed that point earlier today."

"I know we did."

"As I have been telling everyone, I don't know. I do know that panic is starting to take over. As I was coming home, large groups of people were outside of churches. It didn't matter if they were Catholic, Protestants or any other denomination. The Catholics will be jamming confessions. The

**CHAPTER
LIV
“PANIC”**

Moslems will be on their knees facing Mecca, and praying. The Jews will have bags of bread, standing by rivers, tossing the bread into the water, as if tossing their sins away. Everybody is going crazy, and they are justified in their craziness.”

“What should we do?”

“You mean, right now?”

“I really got to think about it. I have until Monday morning, or maybe Sunday night, to make a concrete decision.”

“What am I supposed to do while you are meditating?”

“You can do a number of things. You can sit with me and meditate. You can run around like a chicken without a head. You can panic and start to rave and rant. By the way, do we have a supply of toilet paper in the pantry?”

“What’s the reason for the supply of toilet paper?”

“Why? I’m sure there will be a run on toilet paper in a very short time. I wouldn’t want to be caught short.”

These last few days have been the kind that would try anyone’s soul. The only topic discussed on radio and television has been the appearance of Jesus Christ as a witness. Will it be the Second Coming of Christ? Will it be Judgment Day? Talk shows on radio and television argued the issue no end. Hordes of people were heading into religious houses. There were reports of fistfights among some, just trying to get into the confessionals. However, the news from some synagogues was upbeat. The Jews have been waiting for five thousand years for the Messias to come. With Solomon’s announcement, they now know for sure that He is finally arriving Monday morning at nine. Pictures were shown of Moslems kneeling for hours on end. No movement whatsoever, for fear of losing out. I suspect they made some extra side trips to the toilet.

The phone rang. Rose answered, “Hello. Oh, it’s you, Mr. Worthington.” She made sure I heard. “How kind of you to call. Yes, Michael is here. He is meditating. I’m sure he’d love to talk with you. However, I don’t want to break his trance. Mr. Worthington, how are you able to stand the loud music behind you? Is it hard rock? Oh, I understand, you are having your last fling on Planet Earth. You want to get everything in, before the

Second Coming, if it happens Monday morning. Well, at least you are having fun while I'm sitting here watching Michael meditating. I'm really tempted to join you. I'd feel guilty if I were with you, and Michael came out of his trance and found an empty room. But you go ahead, Mr.

Worthington, enjoy yourself as much as you can. Yes, I will tell Michael that you were kind enough to call. Do me one favor, please? Take a glass of scotch and toast Michael and me before drinking it."

I struggled to contain laughter. The G.T. conning the alcoholic! What a pair the two of them would make. Now it was time to get serious about the situation. I tried to analyze the whole picture. No matter how I tried, there was to be no logical conclusion. There has not been a bit of sanity to the

Judas On Appeal hearing from the very beginning. Why should things be different now? This last bomb was dropped, and literally turned the entire proceedings upside-down. If it is Judgment Day, we will never find out if Judas wins his case, and is allowed into Heaven. If it is not Judgment Day, then the *Judas On Appeal* hearing continues and the case will proceed to the end. Anyway, it is mass confusion, to say the least.

"G.T., let's go."

"Where to, Master?"

"We will now go and begin to make sure that we save our souls from eternal damnation."

"How will that come about?"

"We will take out an insurance policy."

"Who will be nuts enough to sell you an insurance policy, payable if you lose your soul?"

"G.T., suckers are born every minute."

"You got that right."

"Seriously, though, we will go to St.

Patrick's and somehow try to get into a confessional. We probably will have to be on line for some time. Anyway, what do we have to lose? Monday morning is quickly approaching. I don't feel like gambling right now. Do you?"

"Hell, no! I'm going with you."

**CHAPTER
LV
“THE J-DAY PREP”**

Monday morning arrived and I asked Rose to keep me company. She would be with me through thick and thin. She was happy that we would be together, if the end was at hand. We did not turn on the radio or the television. We really did not want to hear anything at this point. We both dressed and headed down to the lobby. Sure enough, Luhs and Louis were waiting. Pete, the doorman, was nowhere to be found. Luhs and Louis looked glum. I guess Rose and I looked the same way to them. After brief greetings, we all entered the limo and began the drive to the courthouse. As we were riding, I could not believe the scene. Looking around, I wanted to make sure I was not dreaming.

“Rose, do you see what I see?”

“What should I be seeing?”

“You mean, you don’t see it?”

“Don’t drive me nuts. What should I be seeing?”

“The streets, Rose, the streets.”

“What about the streets?”

“You must be blind or you didn’t wake up yet. They are empty. No people can be seen. I feel we are going through Old Dodge City. Instead of old empty shacks, we are going through canyons of concrete and glass skyscrapers.”

“You’re right. Perhaps everybody is trying to find a place to hide. They think it’s a way for them to save themselves if it is Judgment Day.”

“If it’s Judgment Day, there is absolutely no place to hide. You can bet on that.”

Luhs and Louis did not say one word. They looked straight ahead. It was a most creepy feeling. On every normal day thousands of pedestrians would be crisscrossing the streets of New York. This morning it looked like a giant vacuum cleaner had sucked up all the foot traffic.

As we approached the courthouse, I knew in my bones this day would be most eventful. There weren’t any spectators behind the barricades. Louis pulled the limo to the front of the courthouse. Bos came running down the steps as the limo pulled up. “Mr. Sarto, we got major problems today.”

“Tell me about it.”

“First of all, half of the marshals called in sick. Second, there aren’t any spectators as yet in the courtroom. There are only two reporters up there. Richard is up there. He looks like he swallowed yellow paint.”

“Bos, I should rename you ‘Glad Tidings.’ Do you happen to know what they did to the messenger who brought bad news in the old Roman days?”

“Not really, what did they do?”

“You really don’t want to know. Bos, say hello to my wife, Rose. Rose, this is Federal Marshal Boswell. He is my shadow in the courthouse.”

They exchanged greetings as we walked up the steps.

"Boys, I hope we will see each other at the end of this day. If we don't, I sure loved having you both with me."

"Same here," was the reply from both of them.

We shook hands and went into the courthouse. The halls of the courthouse were literally deserted. Bos held the elevator doors open as Rose and I entered. No marshal to push the buttons. We arrived on the seventeenth floor. Again, nobody was in sight. Cold chills overtook my body. I could not let on that I was starting to get apprehensive. We walked into 1705 and the only ones around were the newsmen and some television workers from the other stations.

Richard was most happy to see Rose and me. He came over and gave us both bear hugs. Bos was right. Richard looked as though he had ingested a gallon of yellow paint.

"Richard, are you feeling OK?"

"Mr. Sarto, if I were to say I'm fine, it would be a lie. I thought it would be better to die with Jesus Christ in the room, instead of some God-forsaken place."

"You have an excellent point there."

It was about check-in time when Bos tapped on the door. I opened it and asked him what he wanted.

"Mr. Sarto, the chief has ordered us to lock the doors at eight fifty-five. No one will be allowed to enter or exit once the hearing begins."

"Thanks for the news. It doesn't seem we would be leaving either way. Just sit and try to remain calm. If we go, we will all go together."

The gear was in place and I checked in. "Testing one, two. Testing one, two."

"Loud and clear, Mr. Sarto. Three minutes to post time. Please remember. I am by myself in here. No one showed up. You probably will have to wing it some of the time. Just tell Richard to focus on the one who is speaking. I don't think there are too many in the courtroom."

"You're right. There are only a few news people around. The only others are the participants. Good luck."

Richard was informed what the producer wanted him to do. He gave his usual nod. It was starting to get close to post time. Everything was all set and the court deputy began to start his usual routine. He walked to the microphone.

"Post time."

"Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session."

As he uttered the last words, the judges began to walk in and took their places.

"Please be seated. The hearing will begin after I have made a few announcements. I have informed all concerning the appearance of the witness. He will be called momentarily. There is to be no demonstration whatsoever. If so, then I will ask the marshals to remove the offending individuals. Now, Court Deputy, please call the witness."

The court deputy was standing when ordered.

"Jesus Christ, please come forth."

The door opened and a beacon of light shone. There He appeared in all His glory. He looked slim, slightly bearded, and possessed a most attractive face. He was dressed in a sparkling white tunic. The whiteness was comparable to fresh-fallen snow on a mountaintop. A simple brown cincture hung from His waist. His eyes were a darkish brown, that could easily penetrate layers of steel. He strolled into the courtroom in a majestic manner and followed the court deputy to the witness chair. After He sat, Solomon began, "Jesus Christ, the World Court wishes to thank you for appearing as a witness."

His first words, "Thank you for inviting Me."

Solomon continued, "With your permission, I would like to inform you what the procedures will be in reference to the questioning."

"I have no objections to what you are to do."

"However, before I inform you of the procedures, I would to ask you a question. The answer to my question is one which Planet Earth is awaiting."

The bomb was about to explode.

"The entire Planet Earth believes Your arrival on this planet is the Second Coming. The Second Coming means Judgment Day. Is Your arrival here today, Judgment Day?"

We all winced, awaiting His answer.

"I want to inform one and all, My arriving here today is not My Second Coming. It is not Judgment Day."

We all cheered in the booth. Bos jumped into the air. All the news people stood and applauded. A giant smile covered His face. Solomon wanted to show his position by banging the gavel. "Silence, please! Silence, please! Silence, please!"

Everyone let out a giant sigh of relief.

Solomon started again, "We now have the answer to that question. I will elaborate the procedures which we will follow for the questioning. I will act as moderator. Four of the judges will ask you questions. The other judge has elected not to question. However, he will partake in the voting. A majority vote is necessary for a decision. Please understand, there is no disrespect

intended by the judges when they ask questions. If it is agreeable, we will proceed."

"I understand, and agree to what you have laid out."

"Fine, the first judge to question will be Judge Machiavelli. Judge Machiavelli, please proceed."

"Good morning. As you have been told by Judge Solomon, our questions are not to be disrespectful. We are just trying to make sure that Judas Iscariot receives a fair hearing."

"I understand."

"Am I correct when I say the purpose for which you first came to Planet Earth was for the redemption of mankind?"

"Yes, you are correct."

"Is it correct that your purpose in coming to Planet Earth was to fulfill the Scriptures?"

"Yes, you are correct."

"Did the Scriptures say that you would choose followers or disciples?"

"Yes, they did."

"Did the Scriptures say that one of your disciples would betray you?"

"Yes, they did."

"Did the Scriptures say that you would be tortured and put to death?"

"Yes, they did."

"Did one of your followers, namely Judas Iscariot, betray you?"

"Yes, he did."

"Were you put to death by crucifixion?"

"Yes, I was."

"Did you choose Judas Iscariot to be one of your disciples?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you or did you not know that one day Judas Iscariot would betray you?"

"Yes, I did."

I now was sure Machiavelli was attempting to paint Jesus Christ into a corner.

"If you knew Judas Iscariot was the one who would betray you, was he chosen because the Scriptures had to be fulfilled?"

"Yes, that was the reason."

"Do you believe you were able to come to Planet Earth, and proclaim that you were the Messiah?"

"No, I don't think so."

"If you did proclaim yourself to be the Messiah, could you offer yourself up for crucifixion, for the redemption of mankind?"

"No, I could not have done it."

"Now, let us try to put everything in its proper place. First, the Scriptures said a Messiah would be born. Second, the Scriptures said a disciple of the Messias would betray him. Third, the Scriptures said the Messias would be put to death. While you were on Planet Earth did you not say that the Scriptures had to be fulfilled?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then, by taking into account points one, two and three, would you say all of the three points were completed?"

CHAPTER
LVII
"JESUS CHRIST TESTIFIES"
Part II

"Yes, they were."

"As I understand, the main goal of your coming to Planet Earth was the redemption of mankind by your crucifixion, and the end result was accomplished. All points were accomplished. Would you say your end result justified the means that were used?"

"Yes, they were."

"Thank you, no further questions."

Jesus Christ did not appear flustered. I must say Machiavelli scored some very important points for Judas.

Solomon asked if a recess was desired.

Christ desired to continue.

Solomon announced, "Judge Buddha will now conduct the questioning of the witness. Judge Buddha, are you ready?"

"Yes, I am."

"Please proceed."

"Good morning. I welcome you to this hearing."

"Thank you."

"Are you familiar with the testimony of Judas Iscariot?"

"Yes, I am."

"He testified that you chose him to be a disciple and yet he did not feel he belonged to the group."

"Yes, I chose him to be a disciple. Why he felt the way he testified, was his own feelings."

"He testified he was driven or possessed by an outside source. Can you enlighten us why he felt the way he did?"

"I could be seen why he felt that way."

"Do you think he was in the possession of Lucifer?"

"No, I do not think he was in the possession of Lucifer."

CHAPTER

LVIII

*"JESUS CHRIST TESTIFIES"**Part III*

"If he wasn't in the possession of Lucifer, was he in the possession of one of Almighty God's agents?"

"No, he was not in the possession of any agent of God Almighty."

"If he was not in the possession of either Lucifer or of God's agent, who possessed him?"
"He was not possessed. He did it of his own free will."

"Are you saying that Judas Iscariot acted and did what he did by his own free will?"
"Yes, I am."

I thought Jesus Christ sounded a bit feisty with His last answer.

"If he exercised his own free will, and went on to do all that he did, the Scriptures would be fulfilled. However, let's assume he exercised his free will, and did not do what he did, would the Scriptures have been fulfilled?"

"No, they would not have been."

"If any part of the Scriptures were not fulfilled, the entire redemption of mankind would have been flawed. Is that correct?"

"Yes, it is."

"Do you believe that God Almighty would allow a flaw in the redemption of mankind, especially when His own Son was involved?"
"No, I do not believe My Father would allow a flaw."

"Thank you. No further questions."

It could be easily seen the atmosphere in 1705 was becoming hot and heavy.

There were a few moments of relaxation before the questioning began. It was difficult to assess what points had been scored for or against Judas. All during the testimony of Jesus Christ, Judas did not look at Him. Apparently he did not want to face up to the individual whom he was believed to have betrayed. Calvin and Dante were quite intent with the witness, and made sure to pay attention to all that was said. The news people were busy scribbling their notes. They knew that what was being said, here and now, would be the top news stories of the day. Solomon banged the gavel.

"Let us have order in the courtroom."
Complete silence came over the room.
"Judge Karl Marx will be the next judge to question the witness. Judge Marx, are you ready?"
"Yes, I am."

"Proceed, please."
"Good morning, and welcome."
"Thank you."
"As you know, while I lived on Planet Earth, I was considered an atheist."
"Yes, I know."

"Unfortunately for me, I discovered much too late that I was wrong."

Jesus' expression did not change, hearing the admission of Judge Marx.

"My questions will not deal with me *per se*. The questions will deal with whether Judas Iscariot was *predesigned*."

"I understand."

"Was Judas Iscariot in the room where the Last Supper was held?"

"Yes, he was in the room until the time that he left."

"Did he return to the room before the Last Supper was completed?"

"No, he did not."

"When did you make the decision to go to the Garden of Gethsemani to pray?"

"I made the decision when the supper was completed."

"Would you say that Judas Iscariot had no prior knowledge of you going to the garden to pray?"

"Yes, that is correct."

"Can you please tell the court how it was possible for Judas Iscariot to come directly to the Garden of Gethsemani, and lead the high priest's delegation to you, to be arrested?"

"He might have followed a group, who usually followed the disciples and Me."

"Let us back-track a moment. While you were praying in the garden, did you have second thoughts about the punishment which you were soon to suffer?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you ask your Father, God Almighty, to remove the cup from you?"

While Marx was asking the last few questions, I felt an incredible tightness in my gut. Forces comparable to ten atom bombs were about to explode.

"Did you ask, perhaps not exactly in these words, '*My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done?*'"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you know that if you were to drink from the cup, you would be tortured, humiliated, and subsequently crucified by the Romans?"

"Yes, I did know all of it."

"Knowing that you would be put to death by the Romans, when you said to your Father, '*Thy will be done,*' did you not give up your free will at that moment?"

"Yes, I gave up My will to do what was asked of Me by My Father."

"If you, in fact, gave up your free will, knowing you would be put to death by the Romans, is it not a fact that you committed Roman-assisted suicide, in order to complete the redemption of mankind and the fulfillment of the Scriptures?"

It was unbelievable what was just said.

Rose and Richard had an expression of shock on their faces. The question was one of an extremely frightful nature.

Karl Marx, a confessed atheist, had in effect accused Jesus Christ of committing suicide. The news people gasped. Solomon banged the gavel,

seeking silence. Jesus Christ waited a few moments before He answered the question.

"I believe it would be best for Me to answer your last question in this manner. Let the theologians, of any and all denominations, who presently live on Planet Earth, and will be born in the future, debate and discuss whether or not I committed Roman-assisted suicide."

Karl Marx's last remark: "No further questions."

It was as if ten atom bombs had exploded in room 1705.

Solomon banged his gavel. "Silence, please! Silence!"

After a short respite, Solomon banged the gavel. "Jesus Christ, are you ready to proceed?" He nodded yes. Solomon asked Mohammed if he was ready. He, also, nodded yes. "Fine, Judge Mohammed, please proceed."

"Good morning, I am happy that you accepted the court's invitation."

"I was happy to oblige."

"Am I correct in asking you, if your main purpose to come to Planet Earth two millennia ago, was for the redemption of mankind?"

"Yes, you are correct."

"I understand on that first visit you arrived in poor circumstances. Is that true?"

"Yes, it is true."

"Also, is it true that you grew up in rather modest circumstances?"

"Yes, it is true."

"I understand those circumstances, because I also grew up in extremely modest conditions."

"I know you did."

"Thank you for your understanding. I would like to ask this question. In addition to the redemption, was your purpose on Planet Earth the establishment of the Christian religion?"

"Yes, it was."

CHAPTER LIX "JESUS CHRIST TESTIFIES" *Part IV*

"Why would you want to establish a new religion, when the Jewish people had a religion for centuries?"

"It had to be done. The Jewish people did not accept Me as the Messias. They were seeking a savior or king who would free them from the Roman yoke. They were not looking for a savior to free their souls. Up to the present time, they are still in denial. They are still waiting."

"The Moslem religion has been founded by me."

"Yes, I know."

"Your religion and my religion basically believe in the same tenet. Do you agree?"

"Yes, I do. However, there is one main exception."

"Would you please name and explain the exception?"

"Certainly. Your religion does not accept Me to be the Son of God. Your religion believes in one God. I am a part of that one God. It is a mystery which cannot be explained here and now. It will be fully explained when I return for Judgment Day."

All in the courtroom had expressions of fear and bewilderment. Chills racked my body all over again.

"Two millennia have passed since your crucifixion. Are you satisfied with what has been done on Planet Earth since that day?"

"By and large, yes. The Christian religion has spread to the four corners of Planet Earth.

Remember, I started with only twelve disciples.

The Catholic Church has withstood the test of time, even though it had to suffer through extremely difficult circumstances. This could only have been done because the people believed in something. Naturally, they had to have faith and hope. Basically, the same as the followers of your religion.

"Now, I would like to say what I am displeased with. First, My church and the Hierarchy of the various denominations are living a lifestyle that is completely unacceptable. Throughout the world, millions of souls are suffering from hunger, disease, lack of housing and other misfortunes. At the same time, the hierarchies are enjoying the warmth of their elaborate residences, food of the best quality and medical care of the finest available.

"There is no reason for bishops, cardinals and priests to be dressed in vestments of the highest quality of fabric, and at times, decorated in gold or silver. While on Planet Earth, I walked in the same type of garment that I'm wearing today.

"There is no reason for churches to be built and maintained in a most gaudy and regal manner. Paintings, statues and stained-glass windows are common sights in these churches. I was born in a manger, and grew up in a very modest household.

"Turn these artificial edifices into funds to be used to help the people suffering from the many maladies which plague Planet Earth.

"The pagan lifestyle which has developed through the centuries is not acceptable. There is

only one person who allows birth and death. The one person is God, Himself. No one, and I mean no one individual, has the right to decide who will live and who will die. All those rulers who thought they had the right to decide life and death will never be allowed into the Kingdom of Heaven.

"The souls on earth must lead a moral life while on Planet Earth. The commandments given to Moses still apply. My teachings of love for one another still apply. Anyone who has harassed for his fellow man because of skin color, religion, or nationality will not be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Men who father children and then shirk their moral responsibility will be denied entrance. Those who abuse their parents violate Moses' commandments. They will not be allowed to enter the Kingdom.

"Planet Earth has become a Sodom and Gomorrah. Everyone knows what God Almighty did at that time. I assure one and all, Judgment Day will come. Every soul will receive his just due.

"Did I answer your question?"

"Yes, you did. No further questions."

Silence in the courtroom.

Solomon announced, "Do the advocates wish to question the witness?"

Both of them shook their heads as if to say no. "Good. I thank the witness for appearing. The final decision will be delivered at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. The hearing is now in recess."

All the judges filed out, and Jesus Christ followed them. The advocates and the analyst panel were close behind.

After hearing the final words of Jesus Christ, Rose and I both look dumbfounded. In no uncertain terms, He had chastised all within earshot. No person or group was spared.

"Ladies and gentlemen, all of you have seen and heard a most dramatic presentation of what is expected of each and every one of us. There are no exceptions. No words can follow what was just said. Please tune in tomorrow morning at ten o'clock. The final decision will be given by the panel of judges. Until then, I'm Michael Sarto of WCS TV bidding you to take care."

**CHAPTER
LX
“FINAL DECISION”**

Everything was set. The courtroom was completely packed. Judas' supporters on his side of the room. Supporters of Christianity on the other side. One could easily feel the tension and animosity between the groups. Electrical currents crackled as though a mid-summer thunderstorm was about to erupt. TV stations throughout the entire world were reporting that everyone just stopped what they were doing and turned their attention to the TV. Odds makers, especially in Great Britain and Hong Kong, were claiming that the wagering on the outcome surpassed any event in the history of sports. Some bookmakers were announcing that the wagering surpassed the amount that was wagered on the Super Bowl, World Series, World Soccer Cup and the Kentucky Derby combined. If those statements were true, then the amount being wagered actually staggered the imagination. Throughout the world, some newspapers were reporting that victory parties were being arranged. All the major news polls had the verdict on a split fifty-fifty.

An announcement was issued to the world news services that a verdict was reached before midnight, last night. The judges would appear at ten in the morning, Eastern time, to render to the public their decision.

Throughout the course of the hearing, arguments between family and friends erupted. It appeared that everyone had taken a position. Yes, Judas' soul is allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. No, Judas' soul should remain in Hell. Until the actual verdict was announced, opinions for both sides came forth without any solicitation.

“Post time.”

At ten on the dot, the courtroom went into complete silence. The silence was comparable to what an individual would experience in the deepest recesses of a cave. There was no sound whatever.

The court deputy slowly approached the microphone. “All rise. The *Judas On Appeal* hearing is now in session.”

Everyone in the courtroom was standing as the judges, led by Solomon, strode to their positions on the bench.

Solomon announced, “Everyone please be seated.”

Everyone, like sixth-grade school children, immediately sat down. Still, not one word was spoken by anyone. All appeared to be sitting at the edge of their seats. Judas' face had a gaunt look.

The ordeal of this hearing had taken an immeasurable toll on him. John Calvin, Judas' advocate, was trying to comfort Judas by parting him on the back, without saying one word. On the other side, Dante was smiling as though he knew, and felt, that the verdict would be in his favor.

Solomon then spoke, “To all of you in the courtroom, and to you who might be listening to,

and looking at these proceedings, I serve notice of this judges' panel of the World Court of Religion. I must first report to all that the decision that was reached was not easy to come by. I ask everyone in this courtroom to please respect the verdict that will be given. Please temper your emotions so that there will not be any demonstration. We, the judges, would not like to have pandemonium erupt after the decision."

While Solomon was making his announcement, the other five judges showed no emotion. Each one stared straight ahead.

Solomon continued, "As mentioned, after severe and most heated deliberation, this is the final decision of the World Court of Religion, regarding the appeal of Judas Iscariot for his soul to be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Please, no demonstrations."

My mouth went completely dry. It was as though I had walked miles in the Sahara Desert in the middle of August. I cleaned out my ears to make sure that I heard clearly any utterances that Solomon was about to make.

"The decision is based on this. Three of the judges have voted that Judas Iscariot's soul should be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Three of the judges have voted that his soul should not be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. They voted that his soul should remain in Hell."

A rumbling began to emerge from the spectators. "What now?" could be heard. The sound was becoming louder. Judas' face became

completely ashen. Dante's face had the smile of a victorious general after a major battle.

Solomon banged the gavel. "Please allow me to continue. I have not yet finished rendering the final verdict."

Silence again encompassed the entire courtroom. "The judges have agreed and decreed that since there was a possibility of *predesination* in the case of Judas Iscariot, then the World Court of Religion has ordered that from this moment on, the soul of Judas Iscariot will be removed from Hell, and placed in Limbo, for the balance of eternity."

Judas' supporters began to cheer. Christianity supporters were yelling, "No, no, no."

"Order, please!" Solomon was entreating.

I glanced at the table where Jesus Christ and Dante were seated. Dante's smile quickly disappeared. Jesus Christ was whispering into Dante's ear. Then Dante rose from his seat. The courtroom became quiet again.

He began to speak, "Judge Solomon and all the honorable judges of the World Court of Religion, Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, has asked me to entreat the court for Him to be allowed to make a statement to the court."

Upon hearing Dante's statement, Solomon looked at the other judges to see their reactions. Each one nodded in the affirmative.

Solomon then spoke, "Yes, the judges have agreed to allow Jesus Christ to make a statement to

the court. Will Jesus Christ come forward and take a position at the witness stand?"

As Jesus Christ walked to the witness stand, the courtroom was buzzing. "What is He going to say? What is He going to say?"

Solomon banged the gavel, harder this time. "Please, quiet! Please allow Jesus Christ to make His statement. He is entitled to be heard not only by you in the courtroom, but by everyone throughout the world."

He then turned to Jesus Christ. "Are you ready to make your statement?"

"Yes, I am."

"Please proceed."

"To the Judges of the World Court of Religion, I thank you for the effort that you have put into these proceedings. Also, I thank you for your efforts to arrive at a fair and just decision, according to the testimony that was given. Since, as the judges have agreed, there was a slight possibility of *predetermination* being a substantial factor in the case of Judas Iscariot, and in his case alone, My Father has instructed Me to make the following announcement."

The silence was now complete. The sound of a pin dropping would have been an explosion compared to this silence. Judas' face immediately took on a glow as though he had just taken a sunbath. Lucifer, in the corner of the courtroom, was twisting and turning. He was fearing the possibility of losing a soul. Dante was glum. He seemed to be expecting the worst.

Jesus then spoke, "These words are the instructions from My Father: Since the World Court of Religion has decreed that there was a slight possibility that *predetermination* was a determining factor in the case of Judas Iscariot, in His benevolence, My Father has offered forgiveness to Judas Iscariot. He has instructed Peter, the Gatekeeper of Heaven, to allow the soul of Judas Iscariot to enter the Kingdom of Heaven immediately."

The courtroom went into complete hysterics, pandemonium, bananas or whatever terminology one wishes. Judas leaped into the air. He first hugged John Calvin and then dashed toward Jesus Christ. His face was awash with tears. He knelt at His feet. He began kissing Jesus' robe, thanking Jesus for forgiving him. At the same time, Solomon was banging away with his gavel, entreating for order. No one was paying attention to Solomon at this point.

I felt a hard tap on my shoulder. "Michael, Michael, wake up. It is getting late. What in the world is going on with you? You are perspiring profusely, and your clothes are completely wet. Are you all right?"

"I'm fine, Rose. I'm just fine!"

I wonder, was Judas Iscariot really *predesigned?*

"Rose, do you think Judas Iscariot was *predesigned?*"
"What in the world are you talking about?"

THE END

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MAIL CERTIFICATE TO	Name ▼ MICHAEL G. PORTO 9 GUY MICHAELS P.O. BOX 338 BRONX, N.Y. 10472	Complete all necessary spaces. Sign your application in space 10
Certificate will be mailed in window envelope	Number/Street/Apartment Number ▼ City/State/ZIP ▼	1. Application form 2. Nonrefundable \$20 filing fee In check or money order payable to Register of Copyrights 3. Deposit material Register of Copyrights Library of Congress Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

10

11

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1

TITLE OF THIS WORK ▼

Judas On Appeal

PREVIOUS AND ALTERNATIVE TITLE(S) ▼

PUBLICATION AS A CONTRIBUTION If this work was published as a contribution to a periodical, serial, or collection, give information about the collective work in which the contribution appeared. Title of Collective Work: **T**

If published in a periodical or serial give: Volume ▼

Number ▼

Issue Date ▼

On Page ▼

2

NAME OF AUTHOR ▼

a Michael G. Porto (Pseudonym: Guy Michaels)

DATES OF BIRTH AND DEATH
Year Born ▼ Year Died ▼

9/21/1933

Was this contribution to the work a "work made for hire?"

Yes

No

AUTHOR'S NATIONALITY OR DOMICILE

Name of Country

OR Citizen of ► U.S.A.

Domiciled in U.S.A.

If the answer to either of these questions is "Yes," see detailed instructions.

WAS THIS AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK

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Under the law, the "author" of a "work made for hire" is generally the employer, not the employee (see instructions). For any part of this work that was "made for hire," check "Yes" in the space provided, give the employer (or other person for whom the work was prepared) as "Author" of that part, and leave the space for dates of birth and death blank.

b

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NATURE OF AUTHORSHIP Briefly describe nature of material created by this author in which copyright is claimed. ▼

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Name of Country

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WAS THIS AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK

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Pseudonymous? Yes No

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3

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This information must be given if the claimant is the same as the author given in space 2. ▼
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b **DATE AND NATION OF FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS PARTICULAR WORK**

Complete this information ONLY if this work has been published.

Month ► February Day ► 11 Year ► 1999

United States of America

4
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Material Added to This Work Give a brief, general statement of the material that has been added to this work and in which copyright is claimed. ▼

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DEPOSIT ACCOUNT If the registration fee is to be charged to a Deposit Account established in the Copyright Office, give name and number of Account Name ▶

Account Number ▶

a 7

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 DARREN M. GELIEBTER, 215 EAST 68TH ST APT 17Q, NEW YORK, NY 10065

8

Area code and daytime telephone number ▶ (212) 233-4444

Fax number ▶ 212-452-2048

Email ▶ dgelieber@dorfip.com

CERTIFICATION I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am the

Check only one ▶

- author
 other copyright claimant
 owner of exclusive right(s)
 authorized agent of Michael G. Porto (also Guy Michaels)

Name of author or other copyright claimant, or owner of exclusive right(s) ▶

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Darren M. Gelieber

Date ▶ January 30, 2008

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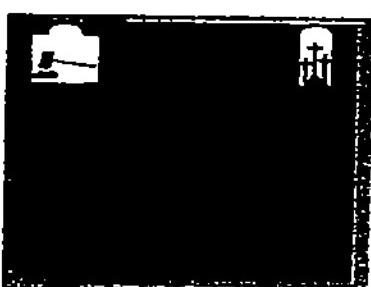
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Editorial Reviews

Jim Walker, Screenwriter, Canyon Country, Calif.

"Guy Michaels has brought one of the Bible's great questions into the spotlight--whether Judas acted of his own free will, or was only following the path predestined for him. This issue not only puts the spotlight on the un-swept corners of Christianity, but, or ourselves, as well. I do feel that he has a nugget of something important here."

Book Description

Judas (scarlet) has been granted a hearing on his appeal to enter Heaven, by the World Court of Religion. The hearing will be held in the Federal Courthouse in NYC at the present time. All participants of the Redemption of Mankind will be resurrected and testify.

[See all Editorial Reviews](#)

Product Details

Paperback: 306 pages

Publisher: Archangel Publishing (February 10, 1999)

ISBN-10: 0967250102

ISBN-13: 978-0967250106

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 5.4 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces ([View shipping rates and policies](#))Average Customer Review:  (1 customer review)Amazon.com Sales Rank: #2,871,869 in Books (See Best Sellers in Books,
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SPOTLIGHT ON CITY PEOPLE

Betting on a writing life

BILL BELL
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Guy Michaels underwent triple-bypass heart surgery a few years ago, and, he says, as he was drifting in and out of consciousness, he heard a voice commanding him to write about the treacherous apostle Judas Iscariot. It took a while, but Michaels has done it.

The book is a religious fantasy titled "Judas on Appeal," which he published himself and which, most appropriately, he betting will take him to the winner's side.

Inappropriately, because his previous session was horse handicapper. Make that analyst," Michaels says. "It reads better."

Familiar figure at lost every track in the industry, Michaels spent years in the business. was one of the first handicappers for the Track Betting Corp., site two best-selling books to beating the odds. In 1985, predicted — on national television, yet — the exact place and show finish of the Breeders' Cup classic.

"I've never met a horse I didn't like," says Michaels, 66, who grew up in East Harlem, the youngest of five sons of an Italian immigrant couple. "People, yes; horses, no."

He was born Michael Guy Porto but changed his name in 1975, when he began broadcasting his track picks in a minute daily show on WHBI-FM (now WAA-FM). Soon the big stations were bidding him, too. He still goes to the track from time to time. At the Meadowlands last Saturday, he bet \$10 on one race and hit an 8-1 win.

"It's just to keep my hand in," he says. "What I really want to do now is write." He had written the two guides, with detailed charts and advice on winning at

the track, but the recovery from his heart surgery was what started him thinking novels.

He wrote a thriller called "The Sugar Affair" and then, about a year ago, started "Judas on Appeal." The plot has seven judges, among them Solomon, Buddha, Machiavelli and Karl Marx, hearing an appeal by Judas to enter heaven. The trial is held in New York, and Daniel is the prosecutor.

Michaels wrote it longhand over nine months after research that included reading the Bible as closely as he once had pored over the Racing Form.

"In high school," Michaels says, "a Franciscan monk once told me if I wrote a book, I should make it controversial. Well, I did."

He ponied up more than \$3,600, published 1,000 copies, began selling them on his Web site (www.judasonappeal.com) and advertised on bumper stickers he gave to his neighbors in Throgs Neck, the Bronx.

But the break is that Amazon.com now lists it.

Michaels always wanted to write, he says, but other things came along, including jobs as a funeral home gofer and an insurance salesman.

Michaels was 11 when his father, who worked in a shipyard, died in a fall. He went to

Catholic schools, and with the help of Vito Mercantonio, a left-wing longtime congressman from East Harlem, was granted an appointment to West Point.

"I blew it by flunking physics," he says.

He started going to the track at 18 with the owner of an E. 118th St. pastry store who had befriended him. "He never read the Racing Form," says Michaels, "but I did because I wanted to figure out the game."

Once he figured it out, he applied logic to the statistics that filled column after column and decided the important things were patience and self-discipline. "Without them," he says, "you don't stand a chance."

The closest thing to superstition in his life is a statue of St. Martin de Porres, which he keeps by his bed. He rubs its head twice a day.

De Porres, who reportedly could fly and glowed when he prayed, is the patron saint of hairdressers, public health workers and Peruvian television, but that isn't the reason for Michaels' devotion.

"It's for thanks for his help when I had a problem several years ago," Michaels says.

And because the statue reminds him of one of his teachers at Our Lady Queen of Angels elementary school. "She was a nun named Martin de Porres," he says, "and she looked like Ingrid Bergman."

Michaels also thought about law at one time. He attended St. John's University for a couple of years before deciding to drop the idea.

He stopped handicapping professionally about a decade ago, because the sport lost much of its appeal for him.

**'In high school,
a Franciscan
monk once told
me that if I
wrote a book,
I should make it
controversial.
Well, I did.'**

GUY MICHAELS

Michaels' special rules for coming away a winner at the track:

1. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 2. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 3. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 4. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 5. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 6. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 7. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 8. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 9. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 10. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 11. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 12. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 13. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 14. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 15. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 16. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 17. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 18. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 19. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 20. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 21. Don't bet on horses you don't understand. 22. Don't bet on horses you don't know. 23. Don't bet on horses you don't like. 24. 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EXHIBIT D

THE PUBLIC THEATER

LABYRINTH THEATER COMPANY

THE PUBLIC THEATER

Artistic Directors
PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN & JOHN BRIZZI

Producer Executive Director
GEORGE C. WOLFE **MARA MANUS**

PRESENT

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

by STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

Directed by PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN

within

ERIC BOGOSIAN, LIZA COLÓN-ZAYAS, JEFFREY DE MUNN, YETTA GOTTESMAH,
STEPHEN MCKINLEY HENDERSON, SALVATORE INZERILLO, ADRIAH MARTINEZ,
CRAIG "MUMS" GRANT, JOHN ORTIZ, SAM ROCKWELL, ELIZABETH RODRIGUEZ,
DEBORAH RUSIK, KOHL SUDUTH, CALLIE THOMAS, YUL VÁZQUEZ

Scenic Design ANTONIO MACHA CHALFANT
Costume Design MIMI O'DONNELL
Lighting Design JAPHY WEIDEMAN
Sound Design DARRON L WEST
Fight Direction RICK SORDELET
Casting JORDAN THALER/HEIDI GRIFFITHS
Production Stage Manager MOHICA MOORE

Support for this production has been generously provided by Ira Pittelman, Arielle Topper and The National Endowment for the Arts.

Figure 10. A comparison of the SFRs with the total luminosities are presented in Fig. 10. The star-forming regions are also shown, indicating the potential feedback sites for the X-ray and UV sources.

Although the original purpose was to provide a platform for the new and the development of regional studies, the journal has now expanded its scope. Addressing issues and problems of the Nordic regions, it also covers topics related to the European Union, the Balkans, Russia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. The journal is published quarterly.

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STEPHEN ADLY
GUIRGIS



PHILIP SEYMOUR
HOFFMAN

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A NEW PLAY BY STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS
DIRECTED BY PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN

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EXHIBIT E

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

"This ain't your grandfather's Gospel."

Charlotte Stoudt, THE VILLAGE VOICE

Set in a time bending, seriocomically imagined world between Heaven and Hell, Stephen Adly Guirgis's **THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT** is a philosophical meditation on the conflict between divine mercy and human free will that takes a close look at the eternal damnation of the Bible's most notorious sinner. His latest work from the author of **OUR LADY OF 121ST STREET** shares many of the traits that have made Mr. Guirgis a playwright to reckon with in recent years: a fierce and questing mind that refuses to settle for glib answers, a gift for identifying with life's losers and an unforced eloquence that finds the poetry in lowdown street talk. Guirgis brings to the play a stirring sense of Christian existential pain, which comes to the fore in his parades of faith. (See Brantley, THE NEW YORK TIMES)

"Confirms Guirgis's place as one of our most electric young dramatists."
—Johann Brustein, THE NEW REPUBLIC

"An ambitious, complicated and often laugh-out-loud religious debate."
—Loby Linnman, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

"A real jaw-dropper. [Guirgis's] imagination is dazzling and his command of language unorthright thrilling." —Marilyn Stasio, VARIETY

STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

"Guirgis may be the most extravagantly talented, maddeningly wayward playwright in America . . . To put it clinically, he is a master of American urban vernacular: to put it as one of his characters might put it, the s— is real."

—Jeremy McCarter, THE NEW YORK SUN

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ISBN-13: 978-0-571-21101-2
ISBN-10: 0-571-21101-1
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“*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* by the phenomenally talented Stephen Adly Guirgis . . . is an extraordinary play . . . Not since Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* have I seen a play so unafraid to acknowledge the power of the spirit.”

—MICHAEL BILLINGTON, *The Guardian*

“Breathtaking . . . A profoundly moving look at the difficulty of virtue and the necessity of mercy in an imperfect world.”

—ELYSA GARDNER, *USA Today*

“This expressionistic fantasy draws on sound theological doctrine to advance its soul-searching meditations on guilt and redemption . . . Hearing [Guirgis’s] theological arguments delivered in the rough idioms and unsophisticated accents heard on urban streets is to hear them loud and clear. In giving St. Monica the attitude of a hooker and St. Peter the voice of a dockworker, Guirgis is not diminishing their characters but attesting to their common humanity.”

—MARILYN STASIO, *Variety*

“One of the more scorching theatrical events of the season . . . It’s almost enough to restore one’s faith in the future of serious drama.”

—ADAM GREEN, *Vogue*

“The ambitiousness of [*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*] represents a welcome development by the fierce urban dramatist of *Our Lady of 121st Street*. The two plays link in certain essentials: The gutter vitality of the dramatist’s language is obscenely alive in the mouths of biblical folk, and Mr. Guirgis’ generous heart remains with the damned.” —JOHN HAMILTON, *The New York Observer*

“As compelling and complex as its subject matter.”

—ROBERT DOMINGUEZ, *New York Daily News*

“*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* is no Sunday school class . . . Depending on your faith—or lack thereof—you may find yourself



disturbed or even enlightened by the arguments for and against Judas. For those whose church is the theater, there's plenty here to feed the soul." —DAVID COTE, *Time Out New York*

"Guirgis has made a name for himself as a gritty, urban writer who possesses both a natural intimacy with street language and the ability to make it sing . . . But to characterize Guirgis as a voice of the inner city might be denying his uncanny sensibility for language . . . The perennial saints and sinners who inhabit this play are given fresh and strikingly contemporary interpretations . . . The Scriptures have never read like this . . . The thousands of tiny gems within this play . . . keep the audience drinking in Guirgis' mosaic and thirsting for more." —PETER SANRILLI, Associated Press

"[Guirgis] examines the purpose of religious faith and asks huge questions about the nature of divine love and the existence of free will." —TOBY ZINMAN, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Guirgis has won friends and influenced theatergoers with a heady mixture of the sacred and the profane . . . The street smarts and cynicism of Guirgis's characters are balanced by the fact that in his plays, the church isn't merely something to ridicule or rebel against, though he does both articulately and humorously. The church can be the last refuge in a heartless, spiritually vacant world, and Guirgis derives considerable power from his unwillingness to give up on it." —ED SIEGEL, *The Boston Globe*

"Don't get the idea Guirgis is letting anyone off the hook—his nonpartisan Jesus loves Donald Rumsfeld and Osama bin Laden as much as he does Nelson Mandela." —CHARLOTTE STOUT, *The Village Voice*

"[A] wildly ambitious, era-melding show." —ADA CALHOUN, *New York*

STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

Stephen Adly Guirgis is a member of NYC's LABYinth Theater Company. His plays have been produced on five continents and throughout the United States. They include *Our Lady of 12th Street*, which was one of ten chosen for *Best Plays of 2003* (the annual chronicle of U.S. theater) and received Best Play nominations from the Lucille Lortel Foundation, the Drama Desk, and the Outer Critics Circle; *Jesus Hopped the A Train*, which won the Edinburgh Fringe First Award, the Detroit Free Press Best Play of the Year, and the Barrymore Award, and received a Laurence Olivier nomination as London's best new play; and *In Arabia, We'd All Be King*, which was named one of the 10 Best of 1999 by *Time Out New York*, and was a Critics Pick in *Time Out London*. All three plays were originally produced by LABYinth and directed by Philip Seymour

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

Hoffman. They were published in an omnibus edition by Faber and Faber, Inc., in 2003. Guirgis was awarded a 2004 TCG fellowship, attended the 2004 Sundance Screenwriters Lab, and was named one of 2004's 25 New Faces of Independent Film by *Filmworker* magazine. He is the recipient of new play commissions from Manhattan Theatre Club and South Coast Repertory, and is a member of New Dramatists, the Actors Studio Playwrights and Directors Unit, and the MCC Playwrights' Coalition. Television writing credits include *NYPD Blue*, *The Sopranos*, David Milch's CBS drama *Big Apple*, and Shane Salerno's NBC drama *UC: Undercover*. As an actor, he appeared in Brett C. Leonard's *Guinea Pig Spike*, produced at the Public Theater in New York, and onscreen as the born-again pedophile Joe/Earl/Bob in Todd Solondz's *Palm Springs*, as well as starring opposite Michael Pitt in Brett C. Leonard's award-winning film *Jailbait* for Belladonna Pictures. He lives in New York City.

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

STEPHEN ADLY GURGIS

FARBER AND FARBER, INC. / AN AFFILIATE OF FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX / NEW YORK

Also by Stephen Adly Gurgis

*Our Lady of 121st Street; Jesus Hopped the A Train; In
Arabia, We'd All Be Kings* (Faber, 2003)

Faber and Faber, Inc.
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19 Union Square West, New York 10003

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Distributed in Canada by Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.
Printed in the United States of America
First edition, 2006

In memory of Nicole du Fratte

(1977-2005)

and Terrence Morris

(1974-2005)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Guirgis, Stephen Adly.
The last days of Judas Iscariot / by Stephen Adly Guirgis.—1st ed.

p.

cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-571-21101-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-571-21101-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Judas Iscariot—Drama. 2. Bible. N.T.—History of Biblical events—
Drama. I. Title.

PS3607.U49L37 2005
812'.6—dc22

2005048810

Dedicated by Gretchen Achille

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Introduction

My theater company is called LABYRINTH. We go away every summer to workshop new material and to fall in love again. One year, they called and asked me, "What are you bringing up this summer?" I said, "I don't know." They said, "Should we just put you down as 'I don't know'?" I said, "I don't know." They said, "How about we just put you down on the schedule as 'Untitled Guirgis Project'?" I said, "Okay." And then—and I honestly have no idea why—I said, "Put me down as *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*." And then I hung up the phone.

I grew up Catholic, so the story of the play is told within those parameters. When I was a kid, the story of Judas troubled me a lot. It didn't make sense to me, it frightened me, and it seemed to fly in the face of the notion of the all-loving and all-merciful God that the very good and loving nuns at the Corpus Christi School on 121st Street were teaching me about. I can't remember if I raised my hand and asked questions. I can't remember if I went home and asked my mom about it. What I do remember is that I stopped believing the story, and that not believing—or not wanting to believe—made me feel a lot of things that didn't feel good. I was nine or ten at the time. From then on—unless I was in trouble—I was in no hurry to seek out God. In fact, I had no sense of who or what God was. I did believe that "God" existed—I still do—but that was about it. And knowing or believing that God existed but avoiding him probably instilled

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

in me a lot of shame and guilt. There's nothing wrong with that. I wasn't avoiding "God." I was avoiding myself.

I don't want to know too much about why I write plays or why I wrote this play in particular. Perhaps it's true that the best way to move forward is to go back, and so, in writing this play, I went back. I don't know. I do know that I am in continuous need of the Spiritual and that I usually go to great lengths to avoid it. And I think I'm not alone in that. And I think a connection to the Spiritual is essential to us as individuals and to the world as a whole. I think our survival depends on it. I also think that religion gets a bad rap in this country and that non-maniac-type people who are religious or spiritual have a responsibility to stand up, be counted, and gently encourage others to consider matters of faith and to define for themselves what their responsibilities are and what it means to try to be "good." It's not about joining a team or a church or choosing sides or learning a prayer. It's not about man-made concepts of good and evil. It's not about doing "enough" or "too little." It's not about shame and guilt. It's about You. It's about the collective Us. Thomas Merton said, "To be a saint means to be myself" What if that were true?

What is it that we need to overcome in order to truly be "Ourselves"? I won't pretend at all that this play answers that question, but if it provokes the question in you, then please let it. Ponder it. Because we need you.

—STEPHEN ADLY GUTTMAN
NEW YORK CITY, 2005

INTRODUCTION

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT was originally produced by the LAByrinth Theater Company (Philip Seymour Hoffman and John Ortiz, artistic directors) and the Public Theater (George C. Wolfe, producer, and Mara Manus, executive director) at the Public Theater, New York, on March 2, 2005. It was directed by Philip Seymour Hoffman; sets were designed by Andromache Chalfant; costumes by Mimi O'Donnell; lights by Japhy Weidman; and sound by Darren L. West. Fight direction was by Rick Sordelet. The production stage manager was Monica Moore. The cast was as follows:

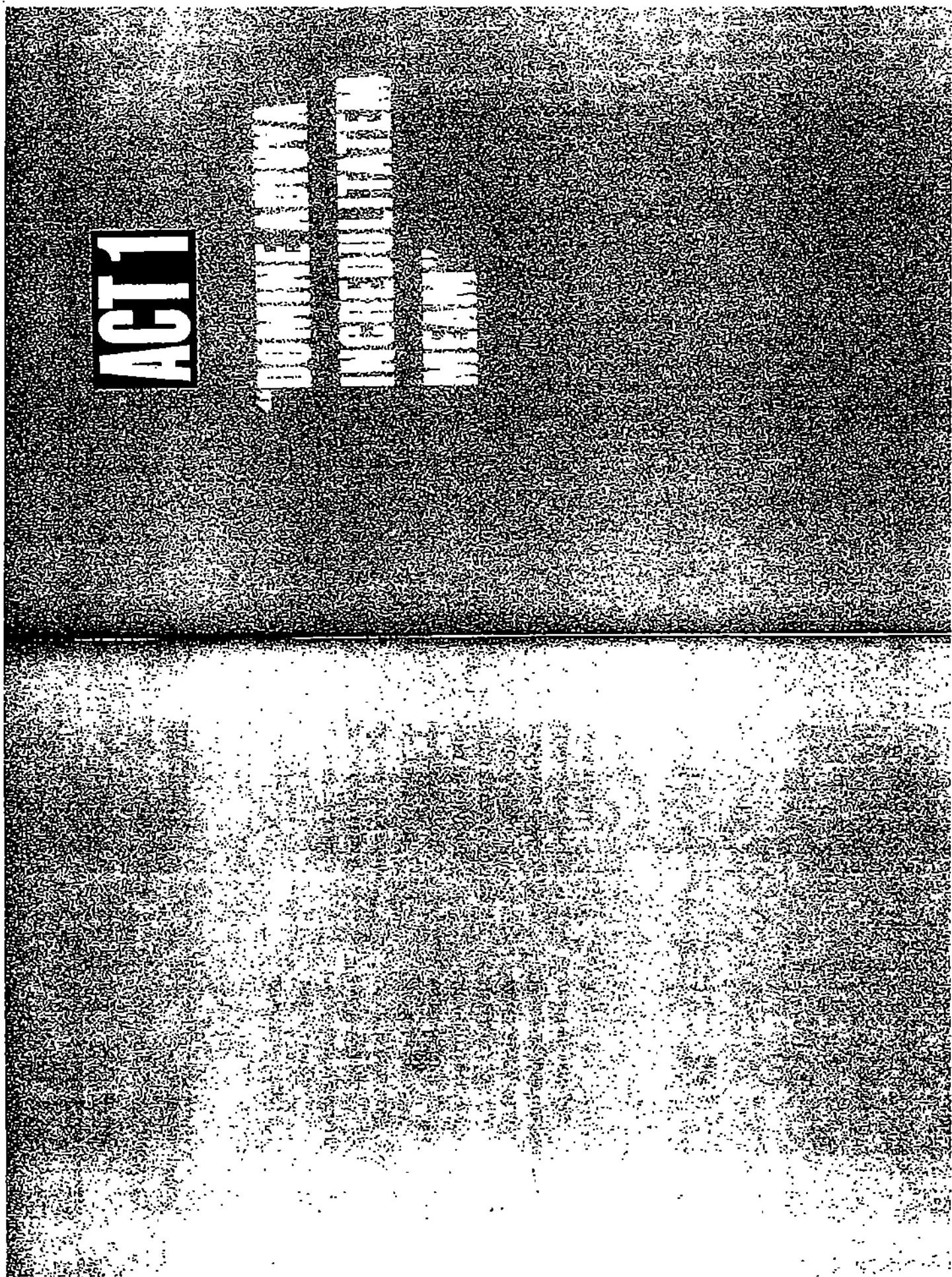
SATAN	<i>Eric Bogosian</i>
GLORIA/MOTHER TERESA	<i>Liza Colón-Zayas</i>
JUDGE/CAIAPHAS THE ELDER/ SAINT MATTHEW	<i>Jeffrey DeMunn</i>
LORETTA/MARY MAGDALENE/ SISTER GLENNA	<i>Terra Grossman</i>
BAILIFF/SIMON THE ZEALOT	<i>Salvatore Inzerillo</i>
SIGMUND FREUD/SAIN'T THOMAS/ SOLDIER 1	<i>Arianne Martinez</i>
PONTIUS PILATE/UNCLE PINO	<i>Stephen McKinley Henderson</i>
MATTHIAS OF GALILEE/ SAINT PETER/SOLDIER 2	<i>Craig "Munus" Grant</i>
JESUS OF NAZARETH	<i>John Ortiz</i>
JUDAS ISCARIOT	<i>Sam Rockwell</i>

EXHIBIT 1
Part 5
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

SAINT MONICA/SOLDIER 3
HENRIETTA ISCARIOT
BUTCH HONEYWELL
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Characters

SATAN PONTIUS PILATE
GLORIA UNCLE TINO
MOTHER TERESA MATTHIAS OF GALILEE
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD SAINT PETER
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER JESUS OF NAZARETH
SAINT MATTHEW JUDAS ISCARIOT
LORETTA SAINT MONICA
MARY MAGDALENE HENRIETTA ISCARIOT
BAUER (JULIUS OF OUTER
MONGOLIA) SISTER GLENNA
BUTCH HONEYWELL
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY
SIGMUND FREUD
SAINT THOMAS
SOLDIERS



Darkness. Rain. From nowhere, a woman emerges from her past.

HENRIETTA ISCAROT: No parent should have to bury a child . . . No mother should have to bury a son. Mothers are not meant to bury sons. It is not in the natural order of things.

I buried my son. In a potter's field. In a field of Blood. In empty, acrid silence. There was no funeral. There were no mourners. His friends all absent. His father dead. His sisters refusing to attend. I discovered his body alone, I dug his grave alone, I placed him in a hole, and covered him with dirt and rock alone. I was not able to finish burying him before sundown, and I'm not sure if that affected his fate . . .

I begrudge God none of this. I do not curse him or bemoan my lot. And though my heart keeps beating only to keep breaking—I do nor question why.

I remember the morning my son was born as if it was yesterday. The moment the midwife placed him in my arms, I was infused with a love beyond all measure and understanding. I remember holding my son, and looking over at my own mother and saying, "Now I understand why the sun comes up at day and the stars come out at night. I understand why rain falls gently. Now I understand you, Mother" . . .

I loved my son every day of his life, and I will love him ferociously long after I've stopped breathing. I am a simple woman. I am not bright or learn-ed. I do not read. I do not write. My opinions are not solicited. My voice is not

important . . . On the day of my son's birth I was infused with a love beyond all measure and understanding . . . The world tells me that God is in Heaven and that my son is in Hell. I tell the world the one true thing I know: If my son is in Hell, then there is no Heaven--because if my son sits in Hell, *there is no God.*

JESUS, carrying a bucket, has approached the woman. He kisses her cheek. She does not notice. They vanish.

A courtroom. Court is in session. A woman with wings, GLORIA, rises.

GLORIA: Between Heaven and Hell—there is another place. This place: Hope. Hope—is located right over here in downtown Purgatory.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Next case!*

GLORIA: Now, Purgatory, contrary to popular belief, has plumbing, and bodegas, and they even got a movie theater and a little park that people can walk their dogs at. Hope—well it ain't got none a that, and it definitely don't smell good.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Next case, Bailiff!*

GLORIA: I worked here in Hope for two and a half years—that's how I got these wings. And I wouldn't trade nothing for these wings—I can fly with these wings! At night, I fly down to Earth, and I watch my littlest Babyboy sleep. He's seven, and he's got a picture of me on his wall—right in between Shaquille O'Neal and the Incredible Hulk. Then, I go fly up town to the window of my oldest Babygirl's house and watch my grandchild, Little Bir, sleep. Most nights I can see my oldest Babygirl, Tanya, with her feet in a pot of hot water, always studying books; and I'll stick around to see her man, Winston, come home late at night from work,

always with a muffin or a hamburger for my Babygirl. Winston's love for my Babygirl is all over his face—I was wrong about him, I always thought he was shifty . . . When I get back to Heaven, I tell my husband, DeLayne, all about it. DeLayne don't like to fly, but he likes to hear the stories, and he likes how I look like when I come home from Earth all “windblown” . . . Now Hope, it changes with the times, but has stood always as God's gift to the last of his children. It is said that every civilization rearranges the cosmic furniture differently. In biblical times, Hope was an Oasis in the Desert. In medieval days, a shack free of Plague. Today, Hope is no longer a place for contemplation—litigation being the preferred new order of the day.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Where's my damn bailiff??!*

BAILIFF: Here, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Then call the next damn case!!!*

BAILIFF: Yes, sir. “*God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Thyself the Impetuous: Motion to Appeal!*”

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Denied—Next case!*

BAILIFF: “*God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Henry Wayne Masters—*”

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Nope!*

BAILIFF: “*God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Benedict Arnold—*”

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Av, hell, no!*

BAILIFF: “*God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Judas Iscariot—*”

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: —“*Judas Iscariot*”??!! Who brings this crap before me?!!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, my name is Fabiana Aziza Cunningham—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: —Never heard of you!

CUNNINGHAM: I live in Purgatory.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Well you shoulda kepr your legs closed!
Motion denied! Next case!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, I have a writ signed by Saint Peter

at the Gates of Heaven!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Next case!*

CUNNINGHAM: Bur I have a writ!

BAILIFF: She has a writ, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Excuse me?

BAILIFF: Just saying: The lady, she's got a writ, so, I mean—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: —Bailiff: let's set up a little *signal*

between the two of us, okay?

BAILIFF: Okay.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Good. Now, when I come to court
 dressed as Ethel Merman in a one-piece bathing suit, that'll
 be my *signal* to you that I want your *opinion*!

BAILIFF: Yes, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Next case!!*

BAILIFF: But what about the writ, sir?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Whar's your name, Bailiff?

BAILIFF: Julius of Outer Mongolia.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: You're on work-release from Purgatory,
 Julius—correct?

BAILIFF: Yes, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Wanna get to Heaven someday? Eat fried
 chicken and mashed pororoes, feel the sun on your face.

BAILIFF: Very much, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Then call the next damn case!!*

BAILIFF: Yes, sir. Absolutely, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Good. Have a lollipop.

BAILIFF: Thank you, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next case!

BAILIFF: But, like, the writ, sir—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Bailiff!!!!!!*

YUSEF AKBAR WAHID AL-NASSAR GAMEL EL-FAYOUMY rises
dramatically from his seat in the court room.

EL-FAYOUMY: Your Honor, if I may?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Who speaks before me?

EL-FAYOUMY: It is I, Yusef Akbar Wahid Al-Nassar Gamele El-

Fayoumy!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Who the hell are you?!*

EL-FAYOUMY: An attorney, great sir! Willing and able to
 prosecute this sham of a case and defend the Gates of Heaven
 and the Kingdom of God against this big shenanigan of a
 so-called writ, great handsome sir! Look no further, Your
 Honor! Yusef Akbar Wahid Al-Nassar Gamele El-Fayoumy is
 a *bearon* for justice!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: A "beacon," eh?

EL-FAYOUMY: May I approach you?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *The bench, not me!*

EL-FAYOUMY: The bench! Of course! YES!—And it is a lovely
 bench, splendid and sturdy like the great derrière that rests
 upon it! Your Honor, I received wind of this so-called
 "writ" several weeks ago. I have been preparing night and
 day to refute the allegations it contains!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, let the record reflect I have no
 opposition to Mr. El-Fayoumy here.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*to CUNNINGHAM*): *Speak when spoken to!!!*
 EL-FAYOUMY: Do not bait this great man, lady! He presided
 over the appeal of Artila the Hun when you were
 nothing more than a cheap shot of whiskey on your
 great-great-grandfather's first unpaid bar tab!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Well said!

EL-FAYOUMY: Forgive the outburst.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: . . . You got a license to practice, Mr.
 El-Fajira?

EL-FAVOUMY: A license? A license! Yes. Absolutely!! Submitted for your most scrupulously discerning approval, eminently great sir!

EL-FAVOUMY *crosses, fumbles, searching his pockets for the license.*

BAILIFF (*imitatingly*): Sir, his name's El-Fayoumy.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: What?

BAILIFF: You called him El-Fajira.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Just gimme my glasses!

BAILIFF: You're wearing them, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*exploding*): My other glasses!!!!!!

BAILIFF: Oh. Here.

EL-FAVOUMY: Most worshipful lord and master: very tiny problem. My license, I seem to have left it in my other suit. I could rush back to Hell and retrieve it—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: From Hell are you?

EL-FAVOUMY: Temporarily detained—a problem with my papers.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: You sure about that?

EL-FAVOUMY: Quite sure, your grace. I attribute the mix-up to the Amricanization of the afterlife—completely understandable in lieu of recent events.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: You're damn right.

EL-FAVOUMY: Yes, your eminence—as are you, great sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham! Let me see this “writ.”

CUNNINGHAM: Here, Your Honor.

JUDGE *renders the writ.*

EL-FAVOUMY (*an aside*): You have great legs, Fabiana. Free for dinner, perhaps?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham! This writ is garbage! Next case!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, my client—
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Your client is Judas Iscariot! Your client sold out the son of God, for Chrissakes!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, that has no bearing—
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham—Judas Iscariot committed the one unforgivable sin. Everybody knows it—
EL-FAVOUMY: —The sin of despair!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: And then he did the world a favor and hung himself!

EL-FAVOUMY: From the olive branch, the coward!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next case!!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, that writ you hold in your hand is signed by Saint Peter!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I know Peter, and he's prone to error, believe me. And he's rash—

EL-FAVOUMY: Rash! Absolutely! A little place called the Garden of Gethsemane ring a bell, Fabiana? When the authorities came to arrest Jesus—after your *client* sold him out with a kiss—what did Peter do?

CUNNINGHAM: I know what he did.

EL-FAVOUMY: *Well, know it again!* Peter took out his sword and started chopping off the ears of the authority! Can you imagine?! Jesus had to correct him, put the ears back on—it was a big mess, really.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next case!

CUNNINGHAM: But Your Honor—
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next case!!

EL-FAVOUMY: Come Fabiana: dinner and a sensual massage—it will soothe you—

CUNNINGHAM: —Your Honor, I cite the Beatitudes, and Kierkegaard. I cite Christ on the Cross!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I cite my foot in your ass, Cunningham!
CUNNINGHAM: I cite Hegel: Within every idea—*this*—is

contained its contradiction—*antithesis*—and out of that struggle is created—*synthesis*. Synthesis, Your Honor! The Union of Opposites—their interdependence and their inevitable clash producing what's next—what must be revealed: God's Perfect Love versus God's Rightful Justice equals what, Your Honor?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Out of my court room!!!!*

CUNNINGHAM: The synthesis of Love and Justice can produce only Mercy and Forgiveness, Your Honor! If a just God sits in Heaven, it can fall no other way!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next case!

CUNNINGHAM: But Your Honor—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Next case! NEXT CASE NEXT CASE*

NEXT CASE!!!!

The gavel bangs. Blackout.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*stage voice*): Crazy Mick Bitch.

In darkness, we hear voices, noises, and portentous rumblings like an earthquake. Lights flash.

VOICE OF ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER: All right now, people!—
Cue them trumpets and the dancing camels!

The sounds of trumpets and dancing camels are heard. Music and wild lights.

SAINt MONICA: Thanks, boys!

Hey, y'all. Welcome to my world . . . So this is the part of the story, where, if it wasn't for me, there wouldn't be no more parts to the fuckin' story, okay? My name is MONICA—better known to you mere mortals as SAINT

Monica. Yeah, dass right, SAINT—as in "better not don't get up in my grill 'cuz I'll mess your shirt up, 'cuz I'm a Saint and I got mad saintly connects," okay? You ever drove down the Santa Monica Boulevard? You ever ate some sushi's down the Santa Monica Pier? Well dass my boulevard and my pier, and dass all I gotta say about that—word to the wise, word is most definitely B-O-N-D bond . . . Anyways (lemme catch my breath). Anyways, up in Heaven, a lotta peoples don't wanna hang with me 'cuz they say I'm a Nag. It's true. And you know what I say about that? I say: "Fuck them bitches," cuz—you know what—I am a Nag, and if I wasn't a Nag, I wouldn't never made it to be no Saint, and the church wouldn't a had no Father of the Church named Saint Augustine—"cuz I birthed the mothahfuckah, raised him, and when he started messin' up, like, all the time and constantly, I nagged God's ass to save him! I nagged and nagged and nagged and nagged till God got so tired of my shit that he did save my son, and my son—Saint Augustine—he stopped bangin' whores and sippin' on some wine and he became learn-ed, so fuckin' learn-ed that he's known as one of the Fathers of the Church, and you could look that shit up! Go ahead, look it up right now, I'll wait! . . . Dass right: "Father Up In This Mothahfuckah"! "Father of the Church"—got a plaque and everything! So if I hadn't been a Nag, All a Y'all niggas woulda been a bastard church, so, sip on dat, bitches! . . . Anyways (lemme catch my breath), okay: As a result of my reputation of having God's ear, a lotta mothahfuckahs pray to me—I have three full-time assistants just to sift through it all. Long story short, I was axed to look into the case of Judas Iscarior by this Irish Gypsy lawyer bitch in Purgatory named Cunningham. She wanted me to do some naggin' to God on Judas's behalf, and, quite frankly, I was impressed by her nagging abilities—"cuz that

birch nagged my ass day and night for forty days . . . But I don't nag for juss any anybody, and I definitely don't nag for no mothahfuckah I don't know, so, I went down to check our Judas for my own self—

And now she is with JUDAS.

(*To audience*): He looked fuckin' retarded, he wouldn't talk or nuthin'. He didn't seem to hear me, and I'm not someone who has a problem expressing myself. I figured he was fakin', so I did this:

(*To JUDAS*): Yo, Judas! . . . Judas! . . . Yo, You Deaf, mothahfuckah? . . . Judas, yo! . . .

(*To audience*): I smacked the bitch around a little.

MONICA *strips, kicks, shoves.*

Yo, Helen Keller! Yo, wake up! . . . Don't front—I know you could hear me . . .

(*To audience*): Then I started snappin' on his ass.

(*To JUDAS*): Yo, Judas, you got change for thirty pieces of silver, mothahfuckah? . . . Yo, Judas, how much you pay for that haircut?—thirty pieces of silver? Yo Judas, why you so "hung" up? C'mon, let's "hang" out. C'mon, bitch, go out on a "limb"? You want a "olive"? C'mon mothahfuckah, have a "olive." Wanna go to the "Olive Garden" restaurant? Day got good "Olive Oil" there . . . Ah-airght, fine, come on, Judas, whaddya say you an' me go down to the bar and—betray some mothahfuckahs! Whaddya say?! I know you like betraying!

What's up, you ain't in the mood to betray today?! Ah-airght, mothahfuckah, we can just "hang"?! Get it? Hang?! Get it?! Do you get it? . . . Wassamatter?! Hungry?! How 'bout some

supper?! You want some supper, mothahfuckah?! C'mon, one last supper, whaddya say!

(*To audience*): I couldn't break him. So I sat down next to him.

She sits.

I sat with Judas Iscariot for three days. Then, on the night of the third day, sumpthin' happened. While I was restin' my vocal chords, I saw sumpthin' unexpected. I saw a single tear fall out Judas's eye. Just one. When the tear hit the ground, I saw it was red like a ruby. I looked into his eyes, like this:

She looks into JUDAS's eyes.

He couldn't look at me. Or he looked through me. I couldn't tell. His eyes was empty. He barely breathed. He was like a catatonic statue of a former human being. And I detected sadness in him. Paralyzing, immobilizing, overwhelming sadness. His sadness ran through him like a river that had frozen up and died and no one lived there no more. After a while, I didn't know what else to do, so I thought I'd just hold him in my arms for like a minute, warm him up before I left.

She cradles JUDAS in her arms. Best.

I held him in my arms for four days. On the third day, I remembered how Jesus had said that God has the biggest love for the least of his creatures—and Judas was the leastest creature I had ever seen. On the fourth day, Judas dropped another single tear. It was clear-colored this time and it evaporated into the earth on impact. He trembled briefly,

then froze up again . . . I had seen enough. I took off my outer garments and left them for him so he could smell something human. I collected my tears in a bucket and poured it on his face so he could taste the salt. Then I went back home and got on the horn to God. I called direct, yo. Some people call it being a Nag, I call it doing my job. I got a calling, y'all—you should try giving me a shout if ya ever need it, 'cuz my name is Saint Monica, I'm the mother of Saint Augustine, one of the Fathers of the Church, and ya know what? My ass gets results!

A gravel tongue.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next case!

BAILIFF: "God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus *Judas Iscariot!*"

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Bailiff!!!!

BAILIFF: She got a writ signed by God, sir.

SAINT MONICA: *Signed, Sealed, Delivered, moshahfetkah! Pance!*

CUNNINGHAM: Here is the writ, Your Honor—note the signature at the bottom.

SAINT MONICA and JUDAS *parish.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Bailiff!!! Bailiff!!! Where's El Fajita?

EL-FAYOUMY *rises with panache.*

EL-FAYOUMY: Present and accounted for and dripping with anticipation to defend with marvelous cunning and great relish the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth and your great sin-ness against the Satan-spawned traitor Judas Iscariot and

his beguiling but outlandishly misguided counsel, most eminently great and rakishly handsome great sir!!!

Beast.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*re: the writ*): Cunningham, I do not like it when lawyers go over my head.

CUNNINGHAM: You gave me no choice.

EL-FAYOUMY: *Objection, Your Honor!!!* As human beings, we always have choice! Motion to strike!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Mr. El-Fajita, you are aware that the trial hasn't actually begun yet, right?

EL-FAYOUMY: Uh . . . Yes . . . Right. Of course. I was merely, uh . . . Yes, sir . . .

EL-FAYOUMY *sheepishly sits.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: "Fabiana" "Aziza" "Cunningham," that right?

CUNNINGHAM: It is.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: So where's the red hair and freckles, Cunningham?

CUNNINGHAM: My mother was a Romanian Gypsy who settled in Vinegar Hill in Harlem in the 1960s.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: And your father?

CUNNINGHAM: A local parish priest.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Got more than his palm read, did he? All right, then, Cunningham, I think it only fair at this juncture to tell you some things about myself, things that may, perhaps, inspire you to take your little mission elsewhere.

For example, I strongly dislike Tapioca Pudding—

EL-FAYOUMY (*rising*): Tapioca, the worst, I spit on it!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Siddown!
 (P) CUNNINGHAM: But even more than Tapioca, Cunningham,
 I dislike the following: Defense Attorneys as a rule, half-
 breeds in general, and Judas Iscariot as anything other than a
 cautionary tale. Now that a problem for you?

CUNNINGHAM: No.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: You ever met God, Cunningham?

CUNNINGHAM: I don't know that I believe in God.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: You've just handed me a writ signed by

Him, and, yet, you don't know if you believe?

CUNNINGHAM: Correct.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Well, what if God appeared to you,
 Cunningham! Just one day, boom! God: White Beard,
 Flowing Robe, The Whole Back a Lamb.

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: What if you were to go home tonight,
 Cunningham, and Jesus Christ himself were to greet you at
 your door with a dozen Krispy Kremes and a quart of cold
 milk and say: "Cunningham. Fabiana. It's me. I really am
 that thing that you've always feared more than doubted"—
 what would you do?

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: And what if you let him in, Cunningham,
 and you sat down with The Man for just, say, three minutes?
 And you could touch him and inspect him and interrogate
 him all you want and have him do miracles and tell you the
 exact story of your life, and you ended up convinced—
 convinced, Cunningham—wiping away tears of joy and relief
 on your living-room couch. If he *proped* it to you,

Cunningham, would you believe then?

CUNNINGHAM: If he proved it, I suppose I would have to.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: After only three minutes?

CUNNINGHAM: But that would never happen—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham, you're the cynical, faithless
 spawn of a Crackpot Gypsy and a Defrocked Mick—yet you
 just told me Jesus would have you on your knees in three
 minutes.

CUNNINGHAM: So?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: So consider this: Your friend Judas? He
 had Jesus for three years! Think about that, Cunningham.
 Three years in the foxhole with the best friend ya ever had,
 then he shot him in the back for a pack of Kools. Think what
 that says about the essential character of the man. Now go
 home and stir *that* into your wee Gypsy teapot! *Petition's*
invalid, *Motion denied!* *Next case!*

EL-FAYOUMY: Pure genius! I am *ereet!*

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, this petition is signed by *Gza!*
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Yeah, but it ain't signed by your client,
 now, is it?

CUNNINGHAM: My client is catatonic, he's incapable of signing.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: If he's catatonic, then how do you know

he wants an appeal in the first place?

CUNNINGHAM: Who couldn't want to appeal "eternal
 damnation"?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Someone who was aware of his own
 self-inflicted erosion of the capacity to be filled by Grace . . .
 Someone too prideful to ask for forgiveness even in the face
 of the fiery furnace. Or maybe, he don't bother askin', 'cuz
 he knows he don't deserve it!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, the only person who *needs*
 forgiveness is the one who doesn't deserve it.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Then let him ask!
 CUNNINGHAM: I'm asking for him!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: *Our of my court room, sister, and may God*
have mercy on your blated arrogant soul! Now get the back
 Uptown, woman. Stop your rabble-rousing, and get

humble—"cuz you ain't gonna get to Heaven by trying to dismantle the Natural Order of Things that the good lord has so thoughtfully put together!!!

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, are you a citizen of Heaven?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Bailiff! Remove this woman!

CUNNINGHAM: You live here with us—you know no more about God's Law than anyone else in this court!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: My papers are pending—I'll be up there any day now.

CUNNINGHAM: Your papers have been pending since 1864, Your Honor, that's a hundred and forty years—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: —If there's an insinuation at the end of that statement, Cunningham, I suggest you don't make it!

CUNNINGHAM: Not an insinuation, Your Honor, but a question: If the "truth" really does set us free, then what is it, Your Honor, that is progressively precluding your capacity to respond to the call of that truth? Because "a hundred and forty years" suggests to me that you are moving not closer, but farther and farther away from it every day!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: What the hell does "Judas Iscariot" have to do with my truth, Cunningham? I didn't hang myself from some olive branch!

CUNNINGHAM: Not from an olive branch, but on a battlefield in northern Georgia in 1864. Allatoona. And the tree—Oak, I believe. Your Honor, I have to wonder what your honest answer will be, when you are someday asked how different you are now from that day when you died?

An uncomfortable pause.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: . . . Tomorrow morning. Nine a.m. That work for you?

CUNNINGHAM: It does.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*to Bailiff*): Put it on the docket.

BAILIFF: Docket?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Just write it down!

BAILIFF: Um . . .

BAILIFF takes out a pen and scribbles on his hand.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Anything else, Fabiana Aziza Cunningham?

CUNNINGHAM: No, Your Honor.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next fuckin' Case!!!!!!

EL-FAYOUMY: Fear not, your grace, I shall stay this fallen woman as the crocodile stays the one-legged newt!
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: NEXT CASE NEXT CASE NEXT CASE
NEXT CASE!!

The gavel bangs. GLORIA and LORETTA, wearing a hospital gown, appear.

GLORIA: Very little is actually known about Judas Iscariot—
Oh! this is my fellow jury member Loretta. On earth, she's currently on Life Support.

LORETTA: Hi, Hello!

GLORIA: Have they figured out whether you comin' or goin' yet?
LORETTA: Not really. "Any day now," they say.

GLORIA takes a peek around.

GLORIA (*conspiratorially*): Say, Loretta—you smoke cigarettes?

LORETTA: Well, not unconscious on a respirator.

GLORIA: Yeah but—you got one for me?

LORETTA: Maybe in my clutch. Oh. Here.

GLORIA snaps her fingers dramatically and both BUTCH and LORETTA freeze in time.

LORETTA: Oh snap—Newports! Oh, you my girl now! You got a light?

LORETTA (*producing a lighter*): It's a NASCAR lighter.

GLORIA (*uninterested*): Mmmmm-hmmmm.

She lights her cigarette, inhales.

(*To audience*): So anyways—about Judas, nor a lor is known except that he was chosen to be an Apostle, he betrayed Jesus, and then he hung his-self. Nor a lor to go on—especially when we're meant to rely on facts.

LORETTA: You know, I had an uncle—can I say this?

GLORIA: Go ahead.

LORETTA (*addressing the audience*): When I was a little girl, my drunk unclc Pino, he used to like to go around saying:

UNCLE PINO *appears*.

UNCLE PINO: "I believe, because it is absurd! It is certain because it is impossible!"

UNCLE PINO *vanishes*.

GLORIA: What did he mean by that?

LORETTA: No clue . . . But I think—

BUTCH HONEYWELL *enters*.

BUTCH HONEYWELL: Ladies, we're back.

GLORIA (*to audience*): Oh wair—hold up!

So Butch, did we miss anything in there?

BUTCH HONEYWELL: Oh, just some crap about the essential paradox of man: How we refuse to juxtapose the absolute to the relative, and some other some-such abour paradox as an ontological definition which expresses the relation between an existing cognitive spirit and eternal truth— You know, bullshit.

Listen, they passed out the lunch menus—I ordered you guys the Combo Club with Fritters.

LORETTA: Fritters: awesome! Thanks, Butch.

BUTCH HONEYWELL: Right this way, ladies.

The gavel bangs.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next witness!

EL-FAYOUMY: Great Magnificent Sir! The Prosecution now calls Henrietta Iscariot, mother to Judas Iscarior, to the stand!

BAILIFF: State your name, ma'am.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Henrietta Iscariot.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes . . . Good day, Miss Iscariot.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Good day.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes . . . Well . . . I can't help but notice, Miss

Iscariot, that you are a very well-built woman—would it be fair to say "your cup runneth over"?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Um, all the Iscaritors are buxom, if that's what you mean?

EL-FAYOUMY: *My meaning exactly!! Now then, can you recall if Judas Iscariot as an infant was prone to steal more than his fair share of milk from your deliciously well-apportioned bosom?*

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: I can't recall that. No.

EL-FAYOUMY: Very well, but can you recall . . . *this!!!* I take you back to the year eight. You were a single parent raising many children, Judas being your eldest, and the man of the family. You sent him out fishing to get food for you and his poor starving sisters. What happened next?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT (*to JUDGE LITTLEFIELD*): Do I have to answer?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Just tell the truth, ma'am.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Well, Judas didn't come home till very late. I waited by the fire. I was worried, he was only eight. I was concerned that maybe the Romans had detained him for shoplifting again—

EL-FAYOUMY: A shoplifter! So please the court!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: But then he came home.

JUDAS crosses, sits on floor: He is right.

JUDAS: Hi Mommy.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Judas! I was so worried.

JUDAS: Look what I got, Mommy! A spinning top!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Judas, did you catch any fish? Your

sisters are weeping with hunger—

EL-FAYOUMY: Weeping, your great sir! Weeping and Wailing!

JUDAS: I caught five fish, Mommy!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: But where are they?

JUDAS: I sold them in the market and bought this spinning top.

Look how it spins, Mommy!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Judas Iscarior, I am ashamed of you!

JUDAS: But Mommy—

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: —*Selfish boy, you will come to no good!!!*

EL-FAYOUMY: "*Selfish boy, you will come to no good,*" was that

your statement at that time?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Eight—*and too late!!!* Nothing further, great sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cross!

EL-FAYOUMY: No, thank you.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I wasn't asking you.

CUNNINGHAM: Miss Iscarior, what happened the next day?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: Well, he ran away from home that night, and I searched for him all day. Late in the afternoon, I observed the following:

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE, a *sad-looking boy, crosses to JUDAS, who is spinning his top, alone.*

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Hi.

JUDAS: Hi.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Hi.

JUDAS: ... My name's Judas. What's yours?

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Matthias of Galilee.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: *sits.*

JUDAS: Hey, I got an idea: Why don't you go home and get your spinning top, and then, when you get back with your spinning top, we can play battle of the spinning tops!

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: I don't got a spinning top.

JUDAS: Oh,

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: I wish I had a spinning top, all my friends got one except me.

JUDAS: Yeah, that's rough. I used to not have one, too.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: All the kids, they call me "sissypants" 'cuz I don't got no spinning top.

JUDAS: You should ask your mommy to buy you one.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: I don't got a mommy.

JUDAS: Ask your daddy then.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: I got a daddy, but he's very stern. He don't believe in spinning tops, so I can't never get one.

JUDAS: Wow.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: You prolly think I'm a sissypants, too.

JUDAS: No. Hey man—don't cry.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: It's just very hard to get through life without a spinning top, you know?

Star.

JUDAS: You . . . You wanna try mine?

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: For real?

JUDAS: Here.

MATTHIAS spins the spinning top, and his mood immediately improves.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Wow! Nobody in Galilee's got a spinning top like this—this is a wicked cool spinning top, Judas.

JUDAS: I picked it out myself.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Boy oh boy, your father must really love you to buy you such a most definitely dope spinning top as this!

JUDAS: My father's dead.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: What?!!!

JUDAS: The Romans kill'd him.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE (*in one breath*): Yeah? The Romans, they took all our goats last month and now we don't have no money for nothing, even food, and so my father makes nice go to the butcher and ask for bones for my dog but I don't have a dog and the butcher knows I don't have a dog, but he gives me the bones 'cuz he takes pity on me and then I give them to my father and he makes soup for us with the bones and we eat it and it tastes really bad and my grandmoms says my father's pride is wounded 'cuz he can't earn no money 'cuz the Romans took our goats and that's why everything's messed up and I can't have no spinning top or nothing . . . Uh-oh!!

JUDAS: What?

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: I betrah go home now. I have to be home before six. My father's very stern.

JUDAS: Oh. Okay.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Thank you for letting me play with your spinning top, Judas. Maybe someday my daddy'll get some more goats and then I'll get a spinning top, and then I'll come back and play spinning tops with you, and we can play spinning tops and stuff, 'cuz that was really fun.

HENRIETTA ISCARJOT: The sad boy started to leave, then:

JUDAS: Wait. (*Pause*) Here.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: What?

JUDAS: You can have it.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: I can have your spinning top?!

JUDAS: Yeah.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: For real?

JUDAS: Yeah. MATTHIAS OF GALILEE: Wow—ee Zow—ee!!! Dag! Thank you, Judas!

MATTHIAS kisses JUDAS on the cheek, exits.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: When people ask me who my son was, I tell them that story.

CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Miss Iscariot. The witness is excused.

EL-FAYOUMY: Not so fast! Miss Iscariot, your son was picked up by the Roman Authorities the very next day, on a charge of stealing a blind man's staff, correct? A Blind man's staff that he then pawned to Omar the Baker to purchase, it says here: "cotton candy and a royal-blue spinning top," correct?

Correct! . . . Is that correct, Miss Iscariot?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: I don't know, it was so long ago—

EL-FAYOUMY: Speak into the microphone!!!!!!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT: There is no microphone.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. This is true . . . Uh, Your Honor, we have reason to believe that The Staff Deprived Blind Man in question was later run over by a rabid Judean Camel. Herc is the death certificate. No further questions.

Gravel bangs.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next witness!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY: Yes! Great, wise Sir! Prosecution calls the incomparable Mother Teresa to the stand!

MOTHER TERESA *hobbles up to the stand with a cane. She's old, but tough. She wears her signature sari, and a cross around her neck. She can hear hardly at all.*

BAILIFF: Name.

MOTHER TERESA: Did you say something?

BAILIFF: Name?

MOTHER TERESA: What?

BAILIFF: Your name, please, ma'am?

MOTHER TERESA: Oh. Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY (*very, very loud*): I said, "How are you?"

MOTHER TERESA: What?

EL-FAYOUMY (*much louder*): I said, "How are you?"

MOTHER TERESA: What?

EL-FAYOUMY (*very, very loud*): I said, "How . . . ARE . . . YOU?"

CUNNINGHAM: Uh, Judge, Bailiff—I believe we do have a hearing device for Mother Teresa?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*to BAILIFF*): Get the device.

BAILIFF: I believe you have the device, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: What?! Here.

BAILIFF *takes a large set of earphones, hands them to MOTHER TERESA.*

BAILIFF: Ma'am, put these on, ma'am!

MOTHER TERESA: What?

BAILIFF *puts the earphones on MOTHER TERESA, hand.*

MOTHER TERESA: Oh. Thank you, giant man.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Hello Mother! Yes. Can you hear me now?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY (*much softer*): How about now?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess.

SAINT PETER: My name is Peter. They got a Basilica named after me in Rome, which is ironic, 'cuz, back in the day, if you even said the word "Rome" in my presence—more than likely I'd beat you with my stick. I even had a standing rule on my fishing boat that was strictly enforced: "Talk about Rome, and your ass can swim home alone." I had to have those kinda rules laid down strong 'cuz my younger brother Drew and his friends—they liked to waste their time talkin' abour overthrowing Rome and the comin' of the Messiah instead a focusing on the task at hand—and I'd always be like: "Look fellas, unless your Messiah gonna come down right now and help us catch some fish, then, y'all need to shut the heck up and put your undivided focus on these damn *nets*." Then, one day, Drew didn't turn up for work, then he come runnin' up to me at the shore at the end of the day when I'm bringin' the boat back in talkin' 'bout: "This is Jesus, bro—he's the Messiah. I ain't fishin' no more. I'm just gonna follow him" . . . And this Jesus, who resembled a Messiah about as much as I resemble a ballerina in a tutu, strides on up to me and says: "Catch any fish today?" And I says: "No I did not catch any fish today," and he says: "Take the boat back out to the Sea and you gonna catch some fish." So, I took Jesus out with me—intending to throw his ass overboard—but then he says: "Cast your nets wide and deep," so I did, and then . . . well . . . All I can say is, I'm a damn professional commercial fisherman. No one knew the Sea and its tides better than me. There weren't no fish out there . . . but . . . that's because it turned out they was all in my net. And then Jesus said: "Follow me and I will make you a fisher of men." And what I didn't know then was that I would never see the Sea again.

SAINT MARTHA: My name is Martha. I was a Jewish tax collector for the Empire. My job was to take the food out of your mouth and see it shipped off to Rome. Roman tax was

EL-FAYOUMY: *now simply minus speaking.*
EL-FAYOUMY: How about that?
MOTHER TERESA: . . . You are tricking me, no?
EL-FAYOUMY: Yes! Yes! I was tricking!
MOTHER TERESA (*playfully*): Bad boy.
EL-FAYOUMY (*playing back*): Very bad! A scandal! Yes! I know.
EL-FAYOUMY and MOTHER TERESA sitter:

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, if Prosecution is through flirting with the beatified iconic virgin, we could, perhaps, begin?
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: El-Fayoumy, contact has been established—let's get on with it now, shall we?
EL-FAYOUMY: Without further hesitation, your grace. Forgive the delay, I was simply charmed to be in her beatific presence, your eminence. I love Mother Teresa, great one. In Christian Egypt, she is a great star—as a young boy, I used to don a towel and my mother's nightgown and stalk the back streets of Cairo looking for dying things to comfort and salve. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: *has become a little emotional.*

(To MOTHER TERESA): Mother! I love you, really. You are the Oasis! You are the Light!
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Do we need to take a moment here, counselor?

EL-FAYOUMY (*dabbing his eyes*): Yes. Yes, Your Honor. Perhaps we do.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Five minute recess! Adjourned.

Gavel bangs.

Lighter crossfade to SAINT PETER and SAINT MATTHEW sitting in a quiet place up above.

exorbitant and non-negotiable. If you had six geese, I took three. If you had a flock of sheep, I took fifty percent. If you had only one sheep, I cut that sheep in half. If you had no sheep, I took a child—your child—and had him or her sold into slavery to settle your debt to the Emperor. This is not a conquered nation and I was a traitor to my people. I was a Jew stealing from Jews. According to our laws, I was a sinner and a traitor, I was unclean—unfit to be gazed upon. That's who I was.

SAIN'T PETER: I hated your ass to look at it.

SAIN'T MATTHEW: And I looked at you, Peter, as a dumb, ignorant fisherman.

SAIN'T PETER: And I looked at you, Matthew, as something I can't say in mixed company.

SAIN'T MATTHEW: I was a scumbag.

SAIN'T PETER: True 'Dat.

SAIN'T MATTHEW: I was a scumbag, and it was against the law to look me in the eye. Jesus, he looked me in my eye. That's all he did. He looked me in my eye and he said: "Follow me." And before I knew it, I had. And before we broke bread that night, I was clean again . . . (*Beat.*) I was *clean*.

Lights fade as the gravel bangs.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: El-Fayoumy, are we ready to proceed?

EL-FAYOUMY rises.

EL-FAYOUMY: Absolutely! . . . Forgive me the delay . . . Mother Teresa—I will not take much of your time here, and, certainly, you are in no need of introduction.

MOTHER TERESA: I don't mind.

EL-FAYOUMY: Very well, then . . . Mother Teresa, you are a soon-to-be-canonical saint and a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace. You are from Albania, which tells me you know how to handle a firearm, but yet, from the age of twelve, you desired to serve God, at eighteen you entered the convent, and at twenty-one, you left for the slums of Calcutta, and soon after began ministering to the sick and dying—which you did with mercy, love, grace, and generosity for the rest of your life until the day you died. Correct?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Absolutely yes, Mother. Now then, Mother, I call you to the stand today for a special purpose.

MOTHER TERESA: And what is dat?

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. I am coming to it . . . Mother, your life and subsequent canonization suggest to me that you know a thing or two about God and the life of the spirit—correct?

MOTHER TERESA: I know what I know. What do you want to know?

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Mother. Is there a Hell?

MOTHER TERESA: I hope not, but I think so.

EL-FAYOUMY: Judas Iscariot—he is in Hell—yes?

MOTHER TERESA: Well, we can't never know for sure, but it doan look good.

EL-FAYOUMY: Mother, shouldn't we feel sorry for someone in Hell?

MOTHER TERESA: Very sorry, Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY: Does God feel sorry for people in Hell?

MOTHER TERESA: More sorry than us, Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY: But, if God feels so sorry, why not bring the "damned" upstairs? "Three hots and a cot," yes? Surely God has that power!

MOTHER TERESA: Boy, God can lead us anywhere, but sometimes, the people, they doan wanna go. And if the people doan wanna go, then, whaddya gonna do?

EL-FAYOUMY: But surely, these people do not prefer to go to Hell?

MOTHER TERESA: You'd be surprised. Do you know what despair is, boy?

EL-FAYOUMY: Mother, illuminate me.

MOTHER TERESA: I will tell you what Thomas Merton—who was a very handsome boy like you—I will tell you what dat boy had to say about despair. You may not know this, but I at one time in my life suffered a great spiritual darkness—

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh no, nor you—

MOTHER TERESA: Quieter now, boy. Jess, for many, many years, I experienced a terrible pain of loss, of God nor wanting me, of God not being God, and of God not really existing. One day, I confided my feelings to a friend: an Irish Nun, one of the Sisters of Loretto from Dublin, Ireland. My friend, Sister Glenna, she quoted to me Thomas Merton on the subject of despair. She said:

SISTER GLENNNA appears.

SISTER GLENNNA: "Despair . . . is the ultimate development of a pride so great and so stiff-necked that it severs the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves."

MOTHER TERESA: Do you understand what I'm saying to you?

EL-FAYOUMY: Can you repeat it?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess, sure:

SISTER GLENNNA: "Despair . . . is the ultimate development of a

pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves."

EL-FAYOUMY: Ah, yes. I think I see.

SISTER GLENNNA vanishes.

MOTHER TERESA: Judas, he succumb to despair. The music of God's love and Grace kept playing, but he, he made himself hard of hearing—like me, no? I need this earphone device to hear you, Jess? Without them, I can no hear nothing. Judas, he threw his earphones away—and dat is very sad, but dat is what he chose and dat is what happened.

EL-FAYOUMY: But Mother, couldn't God have just obtained a megaphone and simply shouted instructions into Judas's ear?

MOTHER TERESA: BOY, one must participate in one's own salvation. In order to hear, one must be willing to listen. When you turn off God, you are saying: "I know better than you." No good, boy. No good.

EL-FAYOUMY: No good indeed. Mother, you are a ravishing delight and I thank you for your astute and expert testimony!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cross!

CUNNINGHAM: Mother Teresa, upon receiving your Nobel Prize, did you say to the world, quote: "The biggest obstacle to Global Peace in the world today is abortion?"

MOTHER TERESA: Jess. I said dat.

CUNNINGHAM: Do you actually believe that?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess, I do.

CUNNINGHAM: You accepted large cash donations from the Duvalier family in Haiti, correct?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess.

CUNNINGHAM: Duvalier being a dictator who murdered and stole from his people?

MOTHER TERESA: He gave. I took.

CUNNINGHAM: Blood money?

MOTHER TERESA: No. Cashier's check.

CUNNINGHAM: You also took money from Charles Keating, the savings-and-loan scam artist who robbed American citizens of billions of dollars?

MOTHER TERESA: For the poor, I took it. You got five dollars? I take from you, too.

CUNNINGHAM: You opposed the Vatican II reforms, which among other things, called for a long-overdue official condemnation of anti-Semitism as it relates to the death of Christ. Did you oppose Vatican II, Mother Teresa?

MOTHER TERESA: Jess.

CUNNINGHAM: You blamed the wars of the world on abortion, took blood money from murderers and thieves, and opposed taking a stance against anti-Semitism. I'm having trouble understanding why we're supposed to consider you an expert on anything having to do with the spirit.

MOTHER TERESA: Oh, Jess?

CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

MOTHER TERESA: Then maybe you better figure it out.

CUNNINGHAM: I had two abortions, Mother Teresa, what do you think about that?

MOTHER TERESA: I will pray for you and your children.

CUNNINGHAM: I don't have any children.

MOTHER TERESA: Not anymore, and dat's terrible.

CUNNINGHAM: Mother Teresa, if abortion is so terrible, then how come I'm not in Hell?

MOTHER TERESA: I don't know. Did anybody tell you you wuren't?

CUNNINGHAM: Must be nice to have all the answers,

MOTHER TERESA: Must be hard to have only questions.

CUNNINGHAM: I can live with my questions, Mother Teresa. But if you can live with those answers, then, with all due respect, I'd say your place is not in Heaven with the Saints, but with the rest of the dinosaurs living in the Stone Age. Nothing further.

EL-FAYOUMY rises emphatically.

EL-FAYOUMY: Mother Teresa—I wonder if you join me in wondering just (*turning to CUNNINGHAM*) *who the hell defense counsel thinks she's speaking like that to??!!*

MOTHER TERESA: It's okay, boy. Everybody wanna say something—

EL-FAYOUMY: —Yes—

MOTHER TERESA: —Nobody wanna listen nothing.
EL-FAYOUMY: This is correct, Mother. And on that well-struck note, Mother, let us now go back and address some of the outlandish—

MOTHER TERESA rises.

MOTHER TERESA: I go now.

EL-FAYOUMY: But I'm not finished.

MOTHER TERESA: I go now.

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh . . . As you wish, Mother.
(*To jury*): And I think we should all emblazon in our memories—

MOTHER TERESA takes off her earphones.

MOTHER TERESA: Boy.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes, Mother?

MOTHER TERESA: Maybe, Boy, you give this earphone device to Girl. Like this, maybe Girl gonna hear something make her head don't hurt no more.

CUNNINGHAM: There's nothing wrong with my head!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham, stand down!
 MOTHER TERESA: Nice boy . . . Handsome boy . . .

*And time stands still as we see MOTHER TERESA hobbles off with
 BALLIFF.*

Gavel bangs.

CUNNINGHAM: Defense calls Simon the Zealot to the stand.

SIMON enters, carrying a staff.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Name.
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Simon the Zealot.
 CUNNINGHAM: You were one of the twelve apostles, Simon—
 correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.

CUNNINGHAM: And you were a zealot.
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.

CUNNINGHAM: Was Judas Iscariot a zealot?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Well, he didn't go to the meetings
 or nuthin', but, yeah, he was pretty much a zealot if you ask me.

CUNNINGHAM: Zealots being Jews seeking an end to the
 violent oppression of the Roman occupation, correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Actually, not exactly, no.

CUNNINGHAM: Are you saying the zealots were *in favor* of the
 occupation?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Nah. Not at all. We hated the Romans—
 absolutely we wanted their pagan asses to hit the curb
 runnin' and bloody, but we was also opposed to any
 gentiles in Palestine—Greek, Roman, whoever. What us
 zealots was really about was promoting a strict adherence
 to the Mosaic Law.

CUNNINGHAM: Mosaic Law being?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: The Law of Moses—the Torah. That was
 the whole bag right there, miss. Get rid of the bad seeds and
 unite the people under the Holy Law of God. Basically, we
 were the street version of Caiaphas the Elder except we had
 knives and shit and we thought Caiaphas was soft.

CUNNINGHAM: Soft how?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: With the Romans. He was a bit of a
 politician, ya know?

CUNNINGHAM: And what was life like under Roman rule?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Where you from, miss?

CUNNINGHAM: New York.

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Okay. Imagine New York was taken over
 by, like, Violent Devil-Worshipping Cannibals who spit on
 your laws, stole all your money, took your women and
 children as slaves, and pur giant swastikas on all your
 bridges, tunnels, libraries, and civic institutions . . . and
 anybody that complained about it got nailed naked to a
 piece of wood in Times Square—left to be eaten by rats, and
 shit on by pigeons until the weight of their body asphyxiated
 them to death. That's what it was like.

CUNNINGHAM: And you thought Jesus was going to change
 that, didn't you?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: We all did.

CUNNINGHAM: Change it how?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Throw them out. That's what the Messiah
 was supposed to do.

CUNNINGHAM: But he didn't do that, did he?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Nah.

CUNNINGHAM: And yet he was capable of it, wasn't he? You
 saw him perform miracles, raise people from the dead.

SIMON THE ZEALOT: It was a bit of a conundrum, yeah.

CUNNINGHAM: Were you at the disturbance at the Temple?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.
 CUNNINGHAM: Whar did you think about that?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Ya kiddin'? I loved it. Judas, too. We all did. We thought it was on, ya know?
 CUNNINGHAM: "On" meaning?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: The beginnin' of the revolution.
 CUNNINGHAM: But it wasn't, was it?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Nah.

CUNNINGHAM: What happened after the riot at the Temple?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Jesus had us all retreat to this house, then, he was like: "I'm going to die soon, so let's just chill."
 CUNNINGHAM: Must have been very disappointing.
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: It was confusing—I mean, whacked-out shit, man. One minute Jesus is beating infidels down—and I'm talking fists and whips—Jesus was whipping ass, knockin' out teeth, screaming he's gonna tear down the Temple, the next minute, he's all passive. And we were all like: We invested three years in this guy, and now he's gonna just lay down? It didn't seem to make no sense.

CUNNINGHAM: Simon: Why do you think Judas Iscariot turned Jesus in to the authorities?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Personally, I think Judas was trying to throw Jesus into the deep end of the pool—make him swim.

CUNNINGHAM: Judas was testin' Jesus?

SIMON THE ZEALOT: Not testin', 'cuz we all knew Jesus had mad skills pass the test.

CUNNINGHAM: What then?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Listen, I knew Judas pretty good. We was pretty tight on account of, ya know, our politics and whatnot. What I believe is this: Judas knew that if the Romans grabbed up Jesus, that Jesus would have to act.

CUNNINGHAM: Meaning?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Meaning *Act*. Get it on and start kicking

ass like He was supposed to. Emancipation was our birthright. That's what the Messiah was there for. I think personally, that Judas did what he did to help Jesus realize his destiny and fulfill his mission.
 CUNNINGHAM: Judas tried to help Jesus?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: I believe so. Yes.
 CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

EL-PAYOUMY rises.

EL-PAYOUMY: So . . . Judas was a "helper," eh?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.
 EL-PAYOUMY: Just . . . there to lend zee helping hand, yes?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.
 EL-PAYOUMY: Yes. Yes, I think you are correct, Zealous one! Because, for me, I know that if my best friend were to sell me out and betray me for a roll of quarters, causing me to be beaten, whipped, gouged, and mangled, and then strung up and left to be baked by the Hor Judean Sun till I resembled a shriveled-up, bearded *frankfurter*.—Why Yes!
 I'm sure my first thought as I gasped for air and bled to death would be, "Really, that Judas—what a *helpful* guy!"—Oh, yes, I must remember to send him zee Thank-You note!! Simon the Zealot, let's talk turkey: Judas was your friend, yes?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.
 EL-PAYOUMY: You thought the same way, yes?
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah,
 EL-PAYOUMY: Shared the same opinions.
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.
 EL-PAYOUMY: Had the same beliefs.
 SIMON THE ZEALOT: Yeah.
 EL-PAYOUMY: Wanted the same things.

EL-FAYOUMY: Wanted them desperately.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY: Then why, Zealot, did you nor do like Judas did? If you believed what you believed and thought what you thought, why, Zealot, did you not join Judas or turn Jesus in on your own? Can you explain me this?

EL-FAYOUMY: Protecting a friend—that is admirable indeed.

EL-FAYOUMY: Protecting a friend—that is admirable indeed. Zealot, Jesus never said his mission as Messiah on Earth was to overthrow the Romans, did he?

EL-FAYOUMY: Not exactly, no.

EL-FAYOUMY: You wanted it to be the mission, you even thought it was the mission, but it wasn't really the mission, was it?

EL-FAYOUMY: How is it, Zealous One, that *you* came to understand that violence wasn't part of Jesus's mission, but

EL-FAYOUMY: Answer me this: What was your inner life like

before you met Jesus of Nazareth? And I don't think I need to advise you to be honest here, do I?

EL-FAYOUMY: Nah. I was consumed with anger. Jesus—he saved my life.

EL-FAYOUMY: Man of Zeal: Final Question: Do you believe, as the Bible says, that God made man in his own image?

EL-FAYOUMY: I do.

EL-FAYOUMY: Of course you do, and there, Zealous friend, lies the answer to one of my previous questions. The difference, I posit, between you and Judas Iscariot is that you *accepted* that you were created in God's Image, whereas Judas Iscariot—he sought to create God into *his own image*—God as earthly avenger, which was not God's way. And even though

you were scared, Zealot, even though you were confused and angry, and hurt, still, you chose to obey God, didn't you?

EL-FAYOUMY: I guess I got lucky.

EL-FAYOUMY: Luck indeed! Simon the Zealot: There is something beautiful about you—and that—is your modesty. You are a God-Fearing Man. Go now. Be free.

CUNNINGHAM rises.

CUNNINGHAM: Jesus never proclaimed himself to be God, Simon—correct?

EL-FAYOUMY: Nah. He never did.

CUNNINGHAM: What did Jesus say to Judas at the last supper?

EL-FAYOUMY: He said, "Do what you gonna do."

CUNNINGHAM: Sounds like Jesus approved.

EL-FAYOUMY: Maybe.

CUNNINGHAM: But if you were Judas, Simon, and "doing what you had to do" ended up getting you thrown into despair and hanging from a tree and then sent to Hell to live in misery and infamy in perpetuity—if you were Judas—

CUNNINGHAM: sounds like Jesus had maybe said wouldn't you have kinda wished that Jesus had said something else instead?

EL-FAYOUMY: Yeah, counselor. I very much would have.

CUNNINGHAM: Would it kind of make you feel like you got fucked?

EL-FAYOUMY: Objection: Language! "A soul mouth is a dirty bird!"

CUNNINGHAM: I withdraw the question.

EL-FAYOUMY: ... I woulda felt like you said, though.

EL-FAYOUMY: Thank you, Simon. Nothing further.

EL-FAYOUMY: Simon exits.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next witness!
 EL-FAYOUMY: Most reverent señor—with your magisterial permission—Prosecution now conjures Satan—Prince of Darkness, to the strand!

SATAN enters, *waves amiably to the jury.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Name!
 SATAN (to CUNNINGHAM): Fabiana Aziza Cunningham, right?
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Lou.
 SATAN: I been keeping the light on for ya, Cunningham.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: C'mon now, Lou—why don't you take your seat and we can get started here?
 SATAN: You never changes, Frank, do you?
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I suppose I don't.
 SATAN: I like that about you. Now say, how's Wilhelmina doing? And the girls?
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I wouldn't know. Now, park your caboose in char chassis if you would, please?
 SATAN: I'm sorry. Of course.
 (To EL-FAYOUMY): Fine away.
 (To JUDGE): My apologies, Frank.

BAILIFF enters.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Bailiff!
 BAILIFF: I was helping the elderly, sir!
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Let's just proceed. El-Fayoumy—proceed!
 EL-FAYOUMY: Ah. Yes. Uh . . . Yes . . . Uh . . . How are you today, Satan?
 SATAN: Well . . . Long night, but uh, no regrets.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Up late partying with the decadent and debauched?
 SATAN: Oh, God, does it show?

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh—No no, not at all.
 SATAN: I'll tell ya—I could barely make it through my double-session Pilates this morning—if it weren't for the good genes, I'd be a raisin with tits and a perm.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Well, you look very good. Sincerely. Really, Satan, you have an excellent physique.
 SATAN: Oh—Thank you. So do you.

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh. Thank you, too. Yes, I make exercises . . . Anyway, so . . . No horns and tail today, Prince of Evil?
 SATAN: No.
 EL-FAYOUMY: At the dry cleaners, I suppose . . .
 SATAN: Yes.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Yes I must say, Claimer of the Damned, your candor is quite refreshing.
 SATAN: As is yours.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Oh . . . Thank you . . . Yes . . . Oh! Your jacket, Satan, really, it is smart.
 SATAN: You like it?
 EL-FAYOUMY: Beautiful, really. Armani?
 SATAN: Gucci.
 EL-FAYOUMY: "Gucci." Yes. Elegant. Very. Yes . . . So . . . (And your trousers, they are Gucci, too?)
 SATAN: Yeah.
 EL-FAYOUMY: They have a lovely sheen . . . Anyway, let's begin then, shall we?
 SATAN: I am at your service.
 EL-FAYOUMY: I appreciate that.
 SATAN: And I appreciate your appreciation.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Excellent . . . So . . . Dark One, tell me: Did you ever have any conversations with Judas Iscariot prior to his selling-out of Jesus Christ?
 SATAN: No, I did not.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Sure about that?

JUDAS crosses to playing area. He is very drunk and very troubled.
SATAN meets him.

SATAN: Quite sure, yes.
EL-FAYOUMY: Never "entered into him," as I believe Saint Luke's Gospel puts it?

SATAN: No.
EL-FAYOUMY: And again, you are more or less sure of that?
SATAN: Ask my main squeeze, Sheila: If I had "entered" Judas Iscariot, trust me, he woulda felt my considerable "presence"—if you know what I mean.
EL-FAYOUMY: Yes—you and Jimmy Woods—I've heard the rumors. So then, it would be safe to say that the "Devil didn't make him do it"?

SATAN: Absolutely—Unless, of course, there's some other Devil runnin' around that I don't know about.

EL-FAYOUMY: Very funny. Really, you are quite charming, Satan . . . But let us be quite clear: You did nothing, Satan, nothing, to sway Judas Iscariot towards selling our Jesus of Nazareth, Prince of Peace? Correct?

SATAN: Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY: Not even a tiny nudge?

SATAN: Honestly, he didn't require nudging. Judas was a gimme—it happens like that sometimes.

EL-FAYOUMY: A "gimme," yes. A bad seed.

SATAN: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Well, then, how 'bout after he did the deadly deed? Did you speak with the Savior Betrayer then?

SATAN: I spoke to him, yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY: Care to share?

SATAN: Not a problem. I appeared to Mister Iscariot at Bathsheba's Bar and Grill shortly after the night in question. I was actually in town for a guy named Abdul Mazzi-Hatten, but he never showed. When I encountered Mister Iscariot, he appeared to have already taken full advantage of the Happy Hour.

Oh, Hello, friend. How are you this evening?"—what are you, a fuckin' maître d', man?
JUDAS: "How am I this evening?"
SATAN: I'm Clementine, Clementine of Cappadocia.
JUDAS: Yeah?! Well, why don't you go home and fuck your mother, Cappa-douche-a, okay?!

SATAN: "Doc-sha"—Cappa-doc-sha.
JUDAS: What?!!!
SATAN: It's Cappa-doe-sha.
JUDAS: Well, lemme ask you something—Cappa-douche-ah—Do I look like someone who gives a flying fuck right now about where the fuck you're from?!

SATAN: I'm very sorry.
JUDAS: Sorry don't mean shit, dick! Take all the "sorrys" in the world, pile 'em one on top of the other, ya know what you got, Cappa-douche? You got a big pile a fuckin' nuttin' is what you got! Okay?

SATAN: You're right.
JUDAS: You wanna do somethin' 'bout it?!!!
SATAN: No, sir.
JUDAS: Then go fuck your mother and leave me the fuck alone!
SATAN: I will. Thanks for the advice.
JUDAS: Hey!!! . . . Where you going?!

SATAN: It seems like you preferred to be alone.
JUDAS: Why would I prefer that! What're you saying; I look like some kinda Lone Wolf? Like a fuckin' piranha, bro?

SATAN: Do you mean Pariah?

JUDAS: I mean what I mean. Whaddya—need a right or something?

SATAN: Oh. Thanks.

JUDAS: Like this lighter?
 SATAN: Very nice.
 JUDAS: I bought it today, man. Expensive shit, but—I got it like that.

SATAN: I can see you're a man of wealth and substance. I admire that.

JUDAS: "Wealth and substance"—don't push it. So, what's your name?

SATAN: ... Clementine. Clementine of Cappadocia.

JUDAS: Clementine, eh? Isn't that a girl's name?

SATAN: Not in Cappadocia.

JUDAS: Well, it is here, bro—you sure you ain't a girl, man?

SATAN: Pretty sure, yeah.

JUDAS: I'm Judas, Judas Iscariot—maybe you heard of me?

SATAN: Nah, man—I'm from out of town.

JUDAS: You never heard of me?

SATAN: Nope.

JUDAS: You don't get around much, do ya, Clementine? So whereabouts you from, man—Egypt?

SATAN: Cappadocia.

JUDAS: That's in Egypt, though, right?

SATAN: No—Cappadocia is in Cappadocia.

JUDAS: I dig your pyramids, man—and the sphinx?

(*to BARTENDER*): Bartender! Hey! More of that Mesoporanian Wine for my Nubian friend! And some dates and figs, too!

(*to SATAN*): You smoke opium, Clem?

SATAN: Clem.

JUDAS: And some opium, bartender—the good stuff!

SATAN: You seem like a man on a mission.

JUDAS: Took this girl to a puppet show today, man.

SATAN: Yeah? How was it?

JUDAS: Fuckin' sucked. Puppets are bullshit, ya know?

SATAN: In Cappadocia, we burn puppets!

JUDAS: Well, you people got the right idea over there—That Pharaoh, he's a smart man. Yeah, man. Hey, Clammy—Cheers!

SATAN: Cheers!

JUDAS: Yeah.—Whoa! Hey man, thass a nice shirt, what you pay for it?

SATAN: Two pieces of silver.

JUDAS: Two pieces of silver? HA!!! I'll give you five. Here ya go, switch shirts with me.

SATAN: But, I'm rather fond of this shirt.

JUDAS: C'mon, man—switch shirts—switch shirts. We're buds now, friends an' shic—I'll let you be my wingman—get you laid, bro!

SATAN: A nice brunette?

JUDAS: Two brunettes and a cunuch! C'mon, strip!

SATAN: Oh, okay.

They switch shirts.

(*To audience*): He was so drunk, he didn't even notice my unmistakably Satanic stench.

JUDAS: Yo, I dig this shirt, what is it? Silk?

SATAN: From Cappadocia.

JUDAS: Fuckin' Cappadocian Silk! All right!

SATAN: Your shirt is nice, too.

JUDAS: Yeah?

SATAN: Yeah.

JUDAS: Wow Thanks, man. That's a nice thing to say. Yeah. Been a while since I heard something nice. That's really nice, bro.

Bent.

Hey, man, if I told you something corny, would you think that I was, like, a dick?

SATAN: Not at all.

JUDAS: Why?

SATAN: Minor incident last night—a miscalculation on my part—nothing serious.

SATAN: Well, one thing I can tell you about Hell: As an eternal

destination, it's apparently vastly underrated.

JUDAS: Yeah?

SATAN: And "Hell" is nothing more than the Absence of God, which, if you're looking for a good time, is not at all a bad

thing. You wanna play the lute, sing Mary Chapin Carpenter—that's what Heaven's for. You wanna rock?

Apparently, Hell's the venue.

JUDAS: Are there, like, girls down there?

SATAN: Not many, but I hear they import them from developing nations on weekends . . . But hey, I wouldn't worry about going to Hell.

JUDAS: Even if I did something, perhaps, a little controversial.

SATAN: God understands.

JUDAS: Yeah, but, don't choices have, like, consequences?

SATAN: C'mon, you really think we have a choice?

JUDAS: Well, don't we?

SATAN: Okay. Did you pass by that fuckin' disgusting, stinky, fuckin' leper on your way in here tonight?

JUDAS: Who? Freddy?

SATAN: "Freddy," yeah. You think *he* had a choice, Freddy, stinkin' it up our dierre, can't scratch his balls for fear a pullin' our his testes? Huh? And what about what's-his-face from the old days—Job? Don't you think if Job had a choice he woulda been like: "Okay, God, enough! I ger the fucking pointn'!"?

JUDAS: Yeah, but, Job did say that!

SATAN: Yes he did! And what happened next, Judas? God kept right on fucking with him until Job made the only choice

available—which was to quietly keep his wrinkly ass-cheeks spread wider than the Red Sea till God got tired of drilling him for oil!

JUDAS: I guess . . . But say . . . Ah, never mind.

SATAN: What?

JUDAS: Not important.

SATAN: C'mon.

JUDAS: Okay. Well, say, what if someone were to betray, for example . . . the Messiah—

SATAN: —You mean the *Messiah*, messiah?

JUDAS: Yeah. Say some idiot had a choice to betray the Messiah or not betray him, and he chose to betray him?

SATAN: Gee, I couldn't say. Whaddya you think?

JUDAS: I'd say the guy's fucked, right?

SATAN: I really couldn't say.

JUDAS: C'mon Clams, I'm just askin'.

SATAN: Well, since you asked, I guess I'd say that if this guy—

JUDAS: 'Cuz this is just some hypo-theoretical guy here—

SATAN: Right. I'd say that if this clown we're talking about betrayed the Messiah, that, probably, "*it would've been better for that man, if he had never been born.*"

JUDAS: Never been born??!!

SATAN: Hey—you asked.

JUDAS: That's heavy, man. That's a fuckin' heavy trip, man, Clams.

SATAN: I'm thirsty—how 'bout you?

JUDAS: That's fuckin' really heavy.

SATAN: Let's have another round here, Pops! Two barrels of wine and a hooker menu!

(To JUDAS): You okay, man?

JUDAS: Clams, man, I haven't been laid in three years, bro. Can ya believe that—guy like me?

SATAN: Three years?

ACT 2

**"SIC DEUS DILEXIT
MUNDUM"**

JUDAS: I wasted my prime, man. And then I wasted my prime after my prime.

SATAN: Well, I think you'll prolly get fucked tonight, bro.
JUDAS: Ya think so?

SATAN: Yeah. I'm pretty sure.

JUDAS: I wanna nother fuckin' drink. Tonight man, I'm gonna drink this fuckin' bar!

SATAN: Hey Judas, lemme ask you something: Who is this Jesus of Nazareth guy I've been hearing about?

JUDAS: Jesus of Nazareth?

SATAN: Yeah—I heard he's some kinda somebody.

JUDAS: Some kinda somebody?

SATAN: Yeah, that's what I heard.

JUDAS: Aw, fuck that guy, man—he's a bitch!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY rises triumphantly.

EL-FAYOUMY: "FUCK THAT GUY, HE'S A BITCH"!!!! Your Honor! Nothing further!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cross?

CUNNINGHAM: . . . Not at this time.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Lou, stick around.

SATAN: I know the drill.

The gavel bangs.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Meal break! Fifteen minutes!

EL-FAYOUMY: Fabiana, free for lunch?

Gavel bangs. Lights fade.

Crossfade to JUDAS; fair. JESUS is there with his buckets, alone.

SAINT MONICA appears with MARY MAGDALENE.

SAINT MONICA: Hey, y'all! This is Mary Mags—she the only bitch I let hang with me up here. Tell 'em whatchu gotta say.

MARY MAGDALENE: My name is Mary of Magdala. I was a disciple of Jesus, I was present at the crucifixion, and I was the first person He appeared to after the resurrection.

SAINT MONICA: Bitch got closure!

MARY MAGDALENE: I was one of the founders of the Christian faith, and I was known for my ability, in times of difficulty, to be able to turn the hearts of the Apostles towards the Good.

SAINT MONICA: The good!

MARY MAGDALENE: Some people think I was a whore.

SAINT MONICA: Misogynist bitches!

MARY MAGDALENE: Other people think Jesus was my husband.

SAINT MONICA: Femin-o-tic bitches!

MARY MAGDALENE: I was not a whore.

SAINT MONICA: "Pimps up, Hos Down!"

MARY MAGDALENE: I was an unmarried woman in a town of ill repute.

SAINT MONICA: *I'll* repute!

MARY MAGDALENE: And also, I was not the wife of Jesus either.

SAINT MONICA: Still love ya!

MARY MAGDALENE: But, I am pretty sure that I was his best friend. We shared an intimacy that I cannot put to words except to say we saw into each other's hearts and were in love with what we found . . .

SAINT MONICA: Love!

MARY MAGDALENE: I also knew Judas Iscariot very well.

SAINT MONICA: Gangsta!

MARY MAGDALENE: Out of the Twelve, he was the most moody and the most imperious, and yet, he was my favorite.

SAINT MONICA: Tupac!

MARY MAGDALENE: And in some ways, I think he was Jesus's favorite too . . . Judas was almost an alter ego to Jesus—he was the shadow to Jesus's light. He was the sour to the sweet and the cool to the warm. They often walked together, more often than not arguing—no one could get a rise out of Jesus like Judas could. I can remember times when Jesus emerged from an argument with Judas positively furious—shaking his head wildly, snorting, and clicking his teeth, red-faced with exasperation—and he would tell me what they had been fighting about—still agitated—but, inevitably, he would end up staring into space and sighing—smiling. I think that if someone were to say that Judas was good for Jesus that they would not be mistaken . . .

SAINT MONICA: Not mistaken!

MARY MAGDALENE: When I think of Judas, my heart breaks.

SAINT MONICA: But Mary Mag: If we are all eternal, and if Human Life is only the first mile in a *billion*, do you honestly believe that God could abandon any mothahfuckah so soon in the journey?

MARY MAGDALENE: I don't know. Jesus never talks about it. That's how I know His heart hurts worse than mine.

The grav! bang!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next witness!

CUNNINGHAM: Defense calls Sigmund Freud, Your Honor.

BAILIFF: Name!

SIGMUND FREUD: Doctor Sigmund Shlomo Freud.

CUNNINGHAM: Doctor Freud, would it be accurate to say you qualify as an expert in the field of modern psychiatry?

SIGMUND FREUD: Fräulein—I AM modern psychiatry.

EL-PAYOUMY: Objection, Your Honor!—the witness is boasting!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Overruled!

EL-PAYOUMY: But a "boaster," Your Eminence—it is distasteful, really!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Siddown, El-Payoumy!

EL-PAYOUMY: I lunge to obey you, your grace—but let the record reflect that Prosecution has grave reservations about this man's alleged so-called "standing" as a psychiatric expert!

SIGMUND FREUD: Perhaps a quick jaunt to London for a leisurely perusal of "The Standard Edition of *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volumes One Through Twenty-Four*" would set your mind at ease. . . .

EL-PAYOUMY: *Perhaps it would if you were indeed . . .*

Oh, I see. Right. Yes. Of course. Uh . . . Yes.

He sits.

CUNNINGHAM: Doctor Freud, you are, in fact, the "Founder of Psychoanalysis," correct?

SIGMUND FREUD: I am.

CUNNINGHAM: You maintained a private practice in neuropathology for nearly a half century; is that not so?

SIGMUND FREUD: It is.

CUNNINGHAM: You were on the cover of *Time* magazine in an issue dedicated to the greatest scientific minds of the twentieth century.

SIGMUND FREUD: I was.

CUNNINGHAM: Are you familiar with the case history of one Judas Iscariot?

SIGMUND FREUD: Most certainly.

CUNNINGHAM: Doctor Freud, in your expert opinion, can a suicide victim be prechristified as psychotic?

SIGMUND FREUD: Without question. Man's instinct for self-preservation is his most supple and reflexive muscle. When that muscle fails, it is because his mind has failed. A decision to take one's own life can only be precipitated by a failure of the mind—an irrational rebellion against man's most basic instinct—to endure and live. Therefore, yes—the victim of suicide must be prechristified as, indeed, psychotic.

CUNNINGHAM: In your expert opinion, Doctor Freud, was Judas Iscariot a psychotic?

SIGMUND FREUD: Without question.

CUNNINGHAM: And are psychotics responsible for their actions?

SIGMUND FREUD: No, they are not. For example, say I have a bad bout of influenza. As a result of my bad influenza, I sneeze rudely, but involuntarily, in your face. The next day, you wake up with the same flu. Did I cause your flu? No. My flu caused your flu. I only sneezed because I was sick.

CUNNINGHAM: In your opinion, Doctor Freud, does Judas Iscariot belong in Hell?

SIGMUND FREUD: No, he does not.

CUNNINGHAM: Explain.

SIGMUND FREUD: Suicide is a direct sign of mental illness.

CUNNINGHAM: But did he become mentally ill *after* allegedly betraying Jesus of Nazareth, or was he mentally ill to begin with?

SIGMUND FREUD: Preprogrammed, yes. You must understand: Normal people do not kill themselves—even under extreme duress.

CUNNINGHAM: And what would you say to people who would

say that Judas brought about his own mental illness by betraying Jesus and getting him crucified?

SIGMUND FREUD: I would say this: Number One, you cannot conjure or "bring about" mental illness. Number Two, any God who punishes the mentally ill is not worth worshipping. And, Number Three: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"—the person who could have prevented this tragedy was Jesus, not Judas. He chose not to.

CUNNINGHAM: But isn't Judas responsible because he did what he did of his own free will?

SIGMUND FREUD: Frulein, I once had a suicidal patient leap through my fourth-floor window to her death. She exercised her free will—did I bill her estate for the broken plate-glass window she leapt through? Of course not! My friend Winston Churchill, who provided me safe haven from the Nazis in 1938, likes to say: "The price of greatness is responsibility." I believe firmly in taking responsibility. So, after the unfortunate woman's death, I exercised responsibility for my greatness—by moving my offices to the ground floor. I should think God would have done the same.

CUNNINGHAM: Your witness.

EL-PAYOUMY: Doctor Freud, yes, sorry for the mix-up before.

FREUD *yawns big and disdainfully.*

SIGMUND FREUD (*re: the yawn*): Excuse me.
EL-PAYOUMY: So, Herr Doktor—I must admit I am intimidated to be in the midst of such greatness. After all, you are a "genius," correct?

SIGMUND FREUD: Correct.

EL-PAYOUMY: An "expert"?

SIGMUND FREUD: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: A big brain.
 SIGMUND FREUD: Unequivocally.
 EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. "Unequivocally." Yes. Nice word. And it rolls off your tongue so effortlessly—really, I am impressed.

FREUD *again yawns big and disdainfully.*

A little tired, are we, Doctor? Perhaps a kilo or two of *fine-grade Bolivian flake* would restore your pep!

SIGMUND FREUD: Excuse me?

EL-FAYOUMY: Cocaine, Doctor! "Blow," "Flake," "Rock"—"She don't lie"—does she, Doc??!!

SIGMUND FREUD: What?

EL-FAYOUMY: Over a twelve-year span, you consumed cocaine in what can only be categorized as Prodigiously Massive Quantities, correct?

SIGMUND FREUD: As part of my research, yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: "Research"—yes. And after twelve years of round-the-clock research, you finally came to the conclusion that ingesting staggering amounts of powder up your nose was, perhaps, unhealthy?

SIGMUND FREUD: I was trying to determine its medicinal value.

EL-FAYOUMY: Is that your real nose?

SIGMUND FREUD: Your mother denied you her breast, didn't she?

EL-FAYOUMY: I'll thank you to let me ask the questions, Doctor Fried.

SIGMUND FREUD: *Freud!*

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh, yes, Freud, of course. Forgive me, I made a "you"-slip, didn't I? . . . Anyway, last question Mr. Expert Genius: Doctor Freud: You were an avowed atheist all your life, correct?

SIGMUND FREUD: Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY: And then you died and found out what?

SIGMUND FREUD: I experienced anti-Semitism as a child—it prejudiced me against all religion.

EL-FAYOUMY: Einstein experienced prejudice—but he wasn't wrong like you, was he? My cousin Wagui can't count to ten without drooling, but he wasn't wrong like you either, was he? Was he??!!

SIGMUND FREUD: Intelligence and Faith are two different things!

EL-FAYOUMY: Are they, Doctor Freud? Because I would say that you can't have one without the other. But, of course, I'm not a brilliant genius expert like you, am I?

SIGMUND FREUD: I had a wonderful vibrant mind and my intellectual curiosity was boundless!

EL-FAYOUMY makes a *violent-playing gesture.*

EL-FAYOUMY: Good day, doctor, go blow your nose—you are excused!

CUNNINGHAM (*rising*): Doctor Freud, do sane people commit suicide—yes or no?

SIGMUND FREUD: No!
 (*To* *EL-FAYOUMY*): Though they can sometimes be tempted to *murder!*

EL-FAYOUMY: Go murder an eight-ball, egghead!
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: That's enough! Next witness!

Gavel bangs.

Next witness!

EL-FAYOUMY: Irresistibly Alluring Majesty. Prosecution calls Legendary Hawaiian Singer and Popular Entertainer Don Ho to the stand!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Don Ho's not dead!

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh . . . Well, thank god for that. In that case, Prosecution calls Caiaphas the Elder, High Priest of the Sanhedrin, to the stand!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*rising*): Right . . . Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, at this time, I must excuse myself from these proceedings until such time as said witness has concluded testimony. Before his ascension into the Lap of the Lord, Caiaphas the Elder and I were partners in a successful chain of Kosher Pizza Parlors in East Purgatory—For that reason, at this time, I must step down. *Bailiff!!! Get your ass over there, put on those glasses, and adjudicate—pronto!*
Proceed.

JUDGE exits as EL-FAYOUMY approaches CUNNINGHAM.

EL-FAYOUMY: Fabiana, may I borrow a pen?

CUNNINGHAM: Only if I can shove it through your eye.

EL-FAYOUMY (*confidentially*): Fabiana, how can I prove my sincerity to you? Even though you are always here and I am always here—still—I think of you when you aren't here even though you are always here.

BAILIFF: Next witness, please!

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes—I obey.

(*To Cunningham*): Later we shall discuss.

(*To Bailiff*): Yes. Julius zee Bailiff, correct? May I call you Julius?

BAILIFF: All right.

EL-FAYOUMY: How about Jules?

BAILIFF: I guess.

EL-FAYOUMY: So tell me J—shall we commence?

BAILIFF: Thar'd be good.

EL-FAYOUMY: Wise! Prosecution calls Caiaphas the Elder!

CAIAPHAS enters.

Caiaphas the Elder, High Priest of the Sanhedrin, hello to you.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Hello.

EL-FAYOUMY: "Shalom"—as it were.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Shalom.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiaphas the Elder: Perhaps you can clear this up—is there a Caiaphas the Younger?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No.

EL-FAYOUMY: And yet, you are the Elder?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: I see. Thank you. My cousin Amghad Wahba owes me five bucks now. So, Caiaphas the Elder: In the Bible, it says that Judas Iscariot made an approach to you—a dark and nefarious approach—to offer up the location of Jesus of Nazareth, and to, in fact, turn him in to you and the authorities. Correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiaphas the Elder: Are you saying that it was Judas Iscariot who approached you, and not the other way around?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: Because I saw in a film once, Caiaphas the Elder, where it was *you* who approached *him*.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: It was Judas Iscariot who approached me at the Temple, not the other way around.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. But still, even though your statement is indeed confirmed by all four Gospels, Caiaphas the Elder, I must ask you again: Did you approach Judas Iscariot about betraying his leader and Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I did not.

EL-FAYOUMY: Why not? Jesus was a big headache to you, no? You were legitimately concerned that the high jinks of Jesus would lead to an uprising and a resulting crushing Roman Massacre of your Jewish people in retribution, weren't you?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I was.
EL-FAYOUMY: So, why not reach out and touch someone,

Caiaphas the Elder?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Are you asking me why I didn't try to approach one of the Apostles initially?

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I didn't think it would work.

EL-FAYOUMY: Why not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: There is an old rabbinical saying: "Let them kill you, but do not cross the line." During my eighteenth year reign as head of the Sanhedrin and Guardian of the Temple, I dealt with countless Messiahs, zealots, rebels, and fanatical believers. My experience in these matters taught me: They get killed, yes, but as a rule—they do not cross the line.

EL-FAYOUMY: "Cross the line," yes—this means what?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: To betray your ideals. Your conscience.

The law.

EL-FAYOUMY: Judas crossed that line, didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: He did.

EL-FAYOUMY: He betrayed the ideal in betraying Jesus—The Rabbinical Ideal. He crossed the line.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: Do you admire that?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No, I do not.

EL-FAYOUMY: But why not? We all cross the line sometimes, don't we?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: We are all capable of crossing the line. Thankfully, we do not all do it.

EL-FAYOUMY: But really, Caiaphas the Elder, what's the big deal? You cross a line, so what? Just draw yourself another line, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No. Not correct.

EL-FAYOUMY: Why not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: The line comes from God, doesn't it? The line is given. We do not create it, and thus, it is not ours to modify. It is only ours to Obey or Betray.

EL-FAYOUMY: I see. Caiaphas the Elder: When Pontius Pilate first arrived in Judea, he visited you in the Temple, did he not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: He did.

EL-FAYOUMY: And as a show of his force and might, Pontius Pilate attempted to place symbols of Rome in the Temple, which was, to your people, a great desecration of your Holy Place of worship, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY: It would have constituted a worshipping of False Idols, yes?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiaphas the Elder, when you saw Pontius Pilate attempting this, what did you do?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I told him that he must remove the pagan symbols.

EL-FAYOUMY: And what did Pilate say to that?
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I believe the gist of his reply was: "What are you gonna do about it, Curly?"

EL-FAYOUMY: And what did you do?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: . . . I knelt before him—

EL-FAYOUMY: —and begged for mercy?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No.

EL-FAYOUMY: Groveled for forgiveness?
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No! I removed my headdress, bared my throat to him, and bade him slit it.

EL-FAYOUMY: In other words, Caiaphas the Elder, you "let him kill you, but you did not cross the line."

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I guess so. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiphas the Elder: Was Judas Iscariot obedient?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: To his own will and desires—yes. I believe that he was.

EL-FAYOUMY: And to service that will and those desires, Judas crossed the line. Didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: He served a necessary purpose, but as a fellow Jew, I confess he disgusted me.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiphas the Elder, I thank you—and may I add, you are much more handsome in person than when they portray you on the silver screen!

CUNNINGHAM rises.

EL-FAYOUMY: Your integrity castrated him, didn't it—his little Roman balls rolling down the Temple hill like withered purple grapes! Yes!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I have no response to that.

EL-FAYOUMY: As well you shouldn't! Now then, last question: Caiphas the Elder, it has been said that in Western Culture, the most prized virtue is Honesty, but in Eastern Culture—which would include Judea at that time—in Eastern Culture, the most prized virtue was and is Loyalty. Caiphas the

Elder: Do you agree with said hypothesis?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Counselor, there are six hundred thirteen Sacred Laws in our Torah. Complying with these Laws requires Honesty and Loyalty. But the most important requirement of The Law is *Obedience* to it. That is what is most prized.

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Fair enough. But in your opinion, was Judas Iscariot "loyal"?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Obviously not.

EL-FAYOUMY: Was he "honest"?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No.

CUNNINGHAM: "High Priest of the Sanhedrin"—that was an extremely powerful and prestigious position in Judea—correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Correct.

CUNNINGHAM: In fact, except for the Roman governor and King Herod, the "High Priest" was, in actuality, the most powerful position *in* Judea, was it not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

CUNNINGHAM: Would you mind looking me in the eye when you respond to a question?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: My position was very important. As High Priest, I maintained the Sacred Laws, the safety of the populace, and our tradition.

CUNNINGHAM: Caiphas—Is there a reason you won't meet my gaze? Or is ignoring women simply another component of the tradition you were charged to maintain?

EL-FAYOUMY (*rising*): Objection, Julius! The witness is not just a Holy Man—but a very Holy man! Defense counsel is aware she is a juicy pulchritudinous dish—and yet, the

witness is being berated for merely avoiding the salacious temptations of her intoxicatingly firm and fervently aromatic flesh! I move to censure, really!!

CUNNINGHAM: I withdraw the question.

BL-PAYOUMY: Sexy Vixen—you are warned!

BAILIFF: Hey!

EL-FAYOUMY: Oh! Julius! Yes! Forgive me! She makes my organs bounce! Yes. Uh.

(To CUNNINGHAM): Sorry.

(To BAILIFF): Yes.

He sits.

CUNNINGHAM: Caiaphas, you stared to the Prosecution that Judas Iscariot "crossed the line" and that he "disgusted you"—correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Correct.

CUNNINGHAM: Well then maybe you can help me out here, because I'm a little confused. Judas Iscariot handed Jesus of Nazareth over to you, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

CUNNINGHAM: And then *you* handed Jesus of Nazareth over to Pontius Pilate, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I did.

CUNNINGHAM: So what exactly is the difference between you and Judas Iscariot—'cuz unless I'm missing something here, I fail to see it.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Between me and Judas? Big difference. CUNNINGHAM: Caiaphas, you were a rabbi and a Jew. Jesus was a rabbi and a Jew. Is it not crossing the line for one rabbi to hand over another rabbi to be killed by pagans?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Jesus was a blaspheming, seditious rabbi, and I did not know for sure that he would be killed.

CUNNINGHAM: But the penalty for sedition was crucifixion, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: That was the Roman charge, not mine. CUNNINGHAM: Yes. Your charge was Blasphemy—and what was the penalty for Blasphemy, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Your Honor, I will not sit here and be blamed for the death of Christ yet again!

CUNNINGHAM: No one's blaming you for the death of Christ, Caiaphas. I'm simply asking you a question which I am directing you to answer now before this court: You charged Jesus with Blasphemy. What was the penalty for Blasphemy, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: "Stroning, followed by hanging."

CUNNINGHAM: So then, how can you sit there and pretend that you didn't know for sure that Jesus of Nazareth would be killed?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Jesus could have easily saved himself.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Saved himself how?
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: By retracting his Blasphemous claims! Our Torah has six hundred thirteen Sacred Laws—I can't even count how many Jesus broke or treated with wanton disregard and disdain! He broke the laws that came from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! He violated the word of God. He violated the Laws of Moses. He consorted with the Unclean, and women, and prostitutes. He performed Miracles on the Sabbath, He proclaimed himself Messiah! He forgave sin! Who *wants* *he to forgive sin*? Only God can do that! If that's not crossing the line, then I don't know what is!!

CUNNINGHAM: Jesus was fulfilling your Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah to the letter—

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: —He was also fulfilling the Prophecies in Deuteronomy which warned against "False Messiahs and Marvel workers"; It would have been one thing had he

confined himself to the forests and rivers spouting his ravings as the Baptist did, but at the Great Temple?! I would have been derelict nor to put a stop to it. He was whipping people! Kicking them. Threatening to destroy the Temple! Calling it a Den of Thieves! If someone did that in your Saint Patrick's Cathedral, would you not arrest them?!

CUNNINGHAM: And yet, Judas Iscariot, who came forward in the face of this "great threat," is in your eyes not a patriot, but a traitor. A traitor who, in your words, "disgusted you."

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Because he handed Jesus over for money.

CUNNINGHAM: And why did you hand Jesus over, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: The words and deeds of Jesus were leading towards rebellion—and the price of rebellion under Roman rule was a bloodbath. A massacre, Counselor. So I determined that it were better to have one man dead than a thousand—that's why.

CUNNINGHAM: I see. So, you were looking out for the Common Jewish Man, is that correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I was.

CUNNINGHAM: Were you a Common Jewish Man, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: In the eyes of God, we are all the same. Jewish Man? You were seen as an Aristocrat, weren't you?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I came from wealth.

CUNNINGHAM: Would you say that you were popular with the Common Jewish Man?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: My job was a sacred one—not a popularity contest.

CUNNINGHAM: The High Temple taxes that you inflicted on your people, would you say that made you more popular with the Common Jewish Man or less popular?

EL-PAYOURY: Objection, Your Honor! Vixen is badgering!

BAILIFF: Sustained!

CUNNINGHAM: The exchange rates at the Temple were also extremely unfavorable to the Common Jewish Man, and the purification pools outside the Temple—where the Common Jewish Man was required by law to be cleansed before being permitted to enter the Temple—the purification pools were not free either, were they?!

BAILIFF: Cunningham!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No no, I'll answer: The laws were the laws and the rates were the rates.

CUNNINGHAM: And did you have a sliding scale for the poor?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No.

CUNNINGHAM: So the poor—who constituted a large percentage of the Common Jewish Man at that time—remained impure and unclean and were denied the right of worship.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: You've made your point.

CUNNINGHAM: No, I don't think I have! Your position, Caiaphas, did not require you to be popular with the Common Jewish Man, did it?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: My position required me to answer to God.

CUNNINGHAM: Did God appoint you High Priest of the Sanhedrin?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: It was with God's Blessing—

CUNNINGHAM: —It was with Rome's blessing, Caiaphas! You were appointed by Rome, and at the end of the day, for the eighteen years you served, that's who you had to answer to, and that's who you were required to be popular with! And the day you showed Rome that you couldn't handle your own people was the day you'd have been thrown out on your ass—isn't that true?!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: I belonged to God, not Rome! My job was to uphold the six hundred thirteen Sacred Laws, and to protect my Temple and my People—and that's what I did!

CUNNINGHAM: And was not Jesus of Nazareth one of your people, Caiaphas? Whether he was a messiah, or a prophet, or a Holy Man, or a crazy man—was he not one of your own? And was it not considered the height of treachery to betray Jewish blood to your oppressors? Come on, Caiaphas! Tell us that it did not prick your conscience to turn Jesus, a fellow Jew, over to the Romans! Tell us that handing over a fellow rabbi to his certain death at the hands of the enemy didn't violate your sense of "crossing the line" and your knowledge of the law! Tell us, Caiaphas, that at the end of the day, there was a *difference*—in the eyes of God—between what you did and what Judas did!

Reaf.

This is Purgatory, Caiaphas—I've got all day.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: . . . In terms of result: No difference.

CUNNINGHAM: How about in terms of follow-through: Judas recanted and tried to return the silver, did he not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: He did.

CUNNINGHAM: And did you, Caiaphas, do anything at all to try to prevent Jesus's death?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No.

CUNNINGHAM: And therein lies the real difference between you and Judas Iscariot, does it not? And yet, you sit here and say how Judas "crossed the line" and that he "disgusted" you! And if that's true, Caiaphas, then I wonder, how you must've felt about yourself.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: That's between me and God.

CUNNINGHAM: Well then for your sake, Caiaphas, I sure hope that your God has a more forward-thinking attitude than Judas's God does. Step down, you're excused.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiaphas the Elder, Judas approached you—

correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: He didn't have to approach you, Caiaphas the Elder, did he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: No.

EL-FAYOUMY: And yet he did.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes,

EL-FAYOUMY: Of his own free will.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: And accepted payment for his betrayal.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY: Payment. Judas did not say, "Caiaphas the Elder, put your money away, mister, this one's on the arm," right?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Right.

EL-FAYOUMY: Caiaphas the Elder, I think we all realize the precarious position you were in, trying to protect your citizens from Roman reprisal.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: And it makes you feel good to say that, doesn't it? After two thousand years of persecution and vilification, you finally get around to saying: "Hey, we know it wasn't you and your people's fault." Is that it?

EL-FAYOUMY: Good Caiaphas the Elder, I was only trying to—
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: Win your case, right? I tell you what: You people call me, I come. You question, I answer—but please—never say that you realize the position I was in,

because you have no idea the position I was in. And never try to excuse or forgive me, because I'm not interested in your forgiveness. God's forgiveness: This interests me. Yours? I could care less. Why? Because you have no idea. The

people who need forgiving? The people who perpetrated the lies and exaggerations that became sacrosanct fact and led to hatred and violence for the past two thousand years? They are the ones who need forgiving—and not by you—but by me—me—and my people. It's the Writers of the Gospel who need forgiveness—not me. No, sir. I know what it is to suffer. Do you? I don't think so.

(*To BAILIFF*): Julius: My best to Frank.

EL-FAYOUMY: You're very handsome, Cainaphas.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER: If I am, it's 'cuz God made me, not 'cuz you said so. Good day.

CAIAPHAS *mumbles off wearily. Gavel bangs. Cross-fade to SAINT THOMAS.*

SAINT THOMAS: My name is Thomas. At the Last Supper, I was the first one to say that I would die for Jesus, and I was also the first one to head for the hills doing ninery when the Romans came and arrested him. And then, when Jesus resurrected himself, I was also the guy who said I wouldn't believe He was who He said He was unless I could see with my own eyes the holes in His hands and personally inspect them and touch them—as if I was some qualified medical examiner, like Quincy or something. But the thing of it was, Jesus showed them to me. And not only that, He let me touch them. In a ministry based entirely on the virtues of Faith, He gave me proof. I had no Faith, and he gave it to me for free. I don't know why I got the benefit of my doubt, and Judas didn't get help with his. And I'm not saying this 'cuz I liked the guy—"cuz personally, I thought Judas was a bit of a jerk-off. Actually, "fuckin' dick" would be more accurate. Judas was the kinda guy—at least with me—where, one minute he's your friend, and the next minute, he's

making fun of you in front of everybody. He used to like to say that the reason Jesus had to do the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes was because I ate all the food when no one was looking. Stuff like that. But then other times, he could be real nice, like, once we were partnered together to go into town to heal people and cast our demons, and well, I had some problems that day—everyone I tried to heal ended up getting worse. In fact, this one lady I almost blinded and another guy started going into convulsions—but Judas fixed it. He healed them—he really did—and that tells me his faith was genuine. And when we got back to camp that night, he didn't tell anybody how I messed up. In fact, he said I did a good job, and I appreciated that. I knew Jesus knew it was bullshit, but I appreciated the gesture. I thought it showed largeness on Judas's part. And the thing is, Judas was kind of a dick, but he wasn't shallow or petry. He really was pretty large. He wasn't the best, but he was far from the worst. Jesus liked him, liked him a lot, in fact. Judas was right up there in the top three with Mary Magdalene and Peter, who, by the way, could also be a dick sometimes, too. The trick with Peter was: Never talk about fish. The guy was crazy for fish. Say something wrong about a fish and forgetaboutit. The guy would go crazy. Anyways—some people say Judas did what he did 'cuz he was greedy. Personally, I think that's bullshit. The guy wasn't wandering around the desert for three years with Jesus and a bunch of ragamuffins like us 'cuz he was looking to get rich. Other people say that The Devil got into him. Again, bullshit. Judas was loyal to a fault. Obsessively loyal, even. Judas would have taken on The Devil and his entire army, one against a thousand, if he had to, and he woulda done it with relish. Other people say Judas did it 'cuz he knew the ship was sinking and he was trying to get himself a nut to have something to fall back on.

Lissen: Judas was not a "fall-back" guy, he was one hundred percent "fall forward." And to me, that deserves some consideration. I was not fall forward. Not by a long shot. And neither were most of the others. Judas was a dick, but he deserved better. Just one Saint's opinion.

JUDGE enters.

Next witness!

CUNNINGHAM: . . . Your Honor, at this time, Defense would like to introduce exhibit A-fourteen, *ancient surveillance footage of an event that occurred less than twenty-four hours after Jesus's arrest. Lights, Please.*

A sound room in Jerusalem.

SOLDIER 1: Pilate gonna kick yo ass!

SOLDIER 2: Pilate gonna see that ass—He gonna kick it two times!

SOLDIER 3: Yo—when Pilate see this mothahfuckah's ass, he gonna be like: "Centurion! It's time to whup ass!"

SOLDIER 1: He gonna rape yo wives!

SOLDIER 2: He gonna take yo cattle!

SOLDIER 3: He gonna kick yo cardie's ass, too!

SOLDIER 1: And yo sheep and yo lambs!

SOLDIER 2: Pilate gonna cancel yo grammatha's WIC check, B!

PILATE enters.

PILATE: What's all this damn ruckus about?

SOLDIERS: All hail Pontius Pilate! Hail, hail, hail!

PILATE: Is there a problem here?

SOLDIER 1: Judas is trying to recant!

PILATE: Hold up a minute, who!

SOLDIER 3: Judas Iscarior—from the Jesus of Nazareth crew.

SOLDIER 2: This stinky mothahfuckah right here!

JUDAS: Jesus is an innocent man—please, please—

SOLDIER 1: Should we start whupping ass now?

JUDAS: He's innocent! Please. Please. Jesus is innocent.

PILATE: C'mon now, Judas, them "San-who-saids"—hold up a sec.

(To SOLDIER 2): Yo Cure—what they call themselves?

SOLDIER 2: Sanhedrin, sir.

PILATE: Right. Judas, them SandheadsSons paid you thirry pieces of silver, now that's four months' wages, that ain't no chicken feed.

JUDAS: I made a mistake, please, please, you don't understand, man—

PILATE: I understand perfectly. You sold out your brother, now you feel guilty, so you tryin' ta come in here talkin' "bout "It was dark, I kissed the wrong mothahfuckah," but we Romans, man—Romans don't dance that song.

JUDAS: I'm recanting—

PILATE: You can't recant!
(To his boys): Hey, fellas, remember the last Semite strolled up in here talkin' "bout "I recant"?!

(To JUDAS): Believe me, J-Crew, you doan wanna do that. Whatchu need to do is relax, brother—take the wifey to a puppet show, sumpthin'. This ain't nuthin' but a little PR opportunity before the holidays, thass all—

JUDAS: —But he's innocent. Please. Please—

PILATE: Hey now, lissen: Judas, we don't give no good goddamn 'bout this Jesus—He just a mothahfuckah talks a lotta shit. Everybody talks shit, even I've been known to talk a little shit on the once in a while. Thing is: We ain't tryin' to lay down no heavy charge on that Nazareth boy—

we just gonna beat down his ass a little, make them
Sanhen-ja-call-its happy so's we can all live in peace. I mean:
Dontchu wanna live in peace, Judas? Ain't that what it's all
about?

I mean after all, brother, ain't like we lookin' to crucify
the mudhahfuckah!

Find back to courtroom.

CUNNINGHAM: Defense calls Pontius Pilate!

EL-FAYOUMY: I object!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: On what grounds?

EL-FAYOUMY: On the grounds that it is objectionable!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Overruled!

EL-FAYOUMY: But, your holiness, really, it is objectionable. I
sense it, although I cannot put it into words.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Overruled!

BAILIFF: Name!

PILATE: Pontius Pilate.

CUNNINGHAM: Pontius Pilate?

PILATE: That's right, baby.

EL-FAYOUMY (*rising*): But are you a licensed pilot?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Sideshow, El-Fayoumy!

CUNNINGHAM: Pontius Pilate . . . Judas Iscariot came down to
your tent to recant his testimony—correct?

PILATE: On the advice of counsel, I cite my right to plead the

Fifth Amendment.

CUNNINGHAM: You then told Judas Iscariot that Jesus was only
gonna receive a "beat down," correct?

PILATE: On the advice of counsel, I cite my right to plead the
Fifth Amendment.

CUNNINGHAM: You bear responsibility for the death of Jesus

Christ—not Judas Iscariot, but you—Isn't that correct,
Pontius Pilate?

PILATE: On the advice of counsel, blah blah blah.

(To JUDGE): Your Honor, I got a two p.m. tee time—can I go
now?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: This won't take long, Pontius.

CUNNINGHAM: Judas came to your office and begged you on
bended knee to take the money and release Jesus, and you
refused him! Judas recanted. He tried to return the money—
first to the Sanhedrin and then to you. Do you deny that?

PILATE: Hey, if I had messed up as bad as that car had, I
woulda tried to rebare them ducats, too.

CUNNINGHAM: So you admit that Judas did try?

PILATE: No. I do not admit that he tried. Did you hear me
admit that?

CUNNINGHAM: We all know what happened, Pilate—We just
saw the tape!

PILATE: Ain't nuthin' on that "so-called" tape implicates me of
anything but trying to find a peacefully nonlethal solution to
a potentially incendiary problem.

CUNNINGHAM: Right. Mister Pilate, you were the Fifth Prefect
of Judea, correct?

PILATE: Correct.

CUNNINGHAM: A "Prefect" being what?

PILATE: Governor. Also known as "Procurator." My official
title was "Hedg-e-mon."

CUNNINGHAM: "Hedg-e-mon"?

PILATE: Translated from the Greek, it means "Excellency."

CUNNINGHAM: I see. And you governed or procurated over
Judea from twenty-six to thirty-six A.D., correct?

PILATE: Longest ten years of my life.

CUNNINGHAM: Why do you say that?

PILATE: You ever been to Judea, missy? It ain't Paris, France—believe that.

CUNNINGHAM: I see.

PILATE: Yeah, that Moses musta read the map backwards—

misplaced his bifocals, sumpthin'—'cuz if that was the "promised land," shir, them Jews shoulda held out for a better promise.

CUNNINGHAM: You didn't care for Judea much?

PILATE: Care for it? Armpit of the Empire, if you ask me. No atmosphere, nurhinn'. Hor. Dirty. Dussey. Flies everywhere. Complete lack of Culture and Amusements. I'd a rather spent ten years up inside the crack a my ass . . . But Augustus ordered me to keep the peace there, so I obeyed my Emperor, and did my duty.

CUNNINGHAM: And kept the peace!

PILATE: The Pax Romana, baby, the prime directive—dass right.

CUNNINGHAM: And, under your rule, how was the peace kept in Judea, Mister Pilate?

PILATE: By any means necessary.

CUNNINGHAM: Violently?

PILATE: Violently or otherwise—they was free to have it any ways they wanted.

CUNNINGHAM: According to Philo of Alexandria, who wrote about you in forty-one C.E., your tenure as Governor of Rome was known for its "constantly repeated executions without trial, wanton injustices, graft, and ceaseless and grievous cruelty"—care to comment?

PILATE: No, I do not.

CUNNINGHAM: During your reign as Procurator in Jerusalem, how many deaths did you order?

PILATE: A lot—don't apologize for it either. Them Jews was rowdy.

CUNNINGHAM: "Rowdy"?

PILATE: Dass right—rowdy. As in: not docile. As in: a mutahahfuckah had to put his foot down.

CUNNINGHAM: And you put it down, didn't you?

PILATE: Damn skippy I did. Orders from Rome—what's a brotha to do?

CUNNINGHAM: During your tenure in Judea, how many

Crucifixions would you say you ordered?

PILATE: A lot less than my predecessor—that's for damn sure! That mutahahfuckah would crucify a Semite for yellin' "Fire" at a barbecue—man would go buck-wild from *jump*! Me? I reduced Crucifixions in Palestine by seventy percent, and now, that's documented.

CUNNINGHAM: Well, that's lovely, Mister Pilate, but I'll direct you now to answer the question posed to you.

PILATE: Which was what? CUNNINGHAM: How many Crucifixions did you preside over during your time in Jerusalem?

PILATE: I'd say . . . a few hundred—give or take. So what?

CUNNINGHAM: Over seven hundred Crucifixions while you were on assignment in Judea. Does that sound about right?

PILATE: Sound good to me. Sure.

CUNNINGHAM: And you publicly washed your hands of how many of them, Mister Pilate?

Pause.

PILATE: I don't know what you mean by that.

CUNNINGHAM: I mean that, other than Jesus of Nazareth, out of over seven hundred Crucifixions and countless executions, did you ever—in any other instance—publicly wash your hands and attempt to abdicate responsibility for your actions, Mister Pilate?

*Pilate.**Pilate:* I don't recall.*Cunningham:* You backpedaled because you knew it was wrong, didn't you?*Pilate:* Romans don't have backpedals.*Cunningham:* You knew Jesus was a Holy Man or a fool, but whatever he was, you believed him when he said that his Kingdom wasn't on Earth, didn't you?*Pilate:* See, now, I don't recall that conversation.*Cunningham:* You don't "recall" that conversation? You know what, Mister Pilate, why don't you say that again so I can slap a perjury charge on you! You ordered the death of Christ—you and you alone—and then you pawned it off on Jesus's "recurrence" and Judas's "impotency" and the "politics" of the Sanhedrin and the "rowdiness" of the Jewish people—is that not the case, Pontius Pilate? Yes or No?*Pilate:* You can go on squawking if you want to—my conscience is clean. What you need to do is take it up with them Jews.*Cunningham:* Mister Pilate, were the High Priests of Jerusalem authorized to order a death sentence?*Pilate:* No they were not.*Cunningham:* Was King Herod authorized to issue a death sentence?*Pilate:* No he was not.*Cunningham:* How about the Jewish people themselves—were they free to issue death sentences at their whim and fancy?*Pilate:* No.*Cunningham:* One man, Mister Pilate. In all of Judea, one man alone had the authority to put another man to death. Who was that man, Mister Pilate?*Pilate:* Am I on trial here? 'Cuz lass time I checked, it was your client, Judas Iscariot, freezing his narrow ass off in the ninth Circle of Hell—not me!*Cunningham:* My client recanted with a remorseful heart and was ignored!*Pilate:* Then you need to take that up with them Jews, not me. I mean, this ain't some new theory I'm introducing to ya! It's documented. Ain't no Sherlock Holmes/Nancy Drew Mystery here, lady: Them Jews was cantankerous. Ornery. They worshipped a Jealous, Angry, and Vengeful God—and guess what? Surprise, surprise: They was angry, jealous, and vengeful themselves. I never had a problem in Judea wasn't caused by some rabble-rousing, no-account Jew. Believe me, sister—you need to talk to them, not me.*Cunningham:* It's always the Jews, Mister Pilate, isn't it?*Stephen Amy Gunnis**The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*

you hated them because you knew they were stronger than you. I think thar bothered you a great deal. I think, Mister Pilate, that it made you resentful and vengful and furious. I think it made you feel small and inadequate. I think it gave you skin irritations and nervous tics. I think it kepr you up nights and made you count the days until you could return to the safe, bourgeois comfort of Rome. That's what I think. I think you're hiding behind historical inaccuracies and outright lies, Mister Pilate. I think that you're a liar and a fraud. I think that when Jesus was put before you, you did not see a God or a prophet, you did nor see a lunatic or an innocent, you didn't even see a human being. I think, Mister Pilate, thar whar you saw before you that morning was just one more Jew, and you didn't hesitate. Why would you? . . . You didn't wash your hands, Ponnius Pilate—History did it for you. Isn't that true?

PILATE rises.

PILATE: I think I've had enough here.

CUNNINGHAM: If you were a man, Pilate—you'd own up to the truth!

PILATE: The truth?! Whose truth you talkin' about, Red? The truth is I was made a saint in the Ethiopian Church! The truth is I was named a martyr for the Christian Church in three-forty-eight A.D. That's the damn "truth"!

CUNNINGHAM: A Christian martyr?

PILATE: Did I stutter, girlie?

CUNNINGHAM: Well, I guess that's what they mean about History being "a lie agreed to."

PILATE: A "lie"?! Whatchu know about what's a lie and what's the truth?! Whatchu know about my history?! Alls you got to go on is some book written four different ways by four

different J'ews wasn't even there in the first place! And whatchu know about my life *after* Palestine? Whatchu know about what I mighta did or didn't do when I got back home to the Motherland? Dass right—you don't know jack—do you? They didn't write down that part of the story, did they? Shit—I'm a tell you something: You and your presumptuous nature reminds me more and more of my ex-wife Rhonda every minute—and believe me that ain't no compliment!

Yes, I met that Jesus boy—seemed like a fine fellow! He dressed like a hobo and smelled like a goat, but give the boy a shave and a shower, and he woulda been basically all right. And I'll tell you something else: Unlike Judas, that Nazarene boy had character. He didn't come up on me begging and groveling—crying like a bitch. He faced me like a man, like a Roman almost, and that impressed me. I was willing to just have him be clubbed in his head for a couple hours—redirect his youthful energies—but them J'ews—they wasn't havin' none a that! You can say what you want to, think what you want to, but them J'ews was fixin' to pitch a fit until that boy was served up for lunch like chicken in the skillet! And they had the numbers on us that weekend—two hundred thousand strong converging on the city for they High Holidays and ready to rumble at the drop! I did what I had to do to preserve the damn peace! Why?: 'Cuz that was my damn job! I did my job! I did my damn job and now you wanna call me a liar?! Question my veracity and my character! I am a Roman, lady! One hundred percent, 24/7, we never close! Underneath my ball sac is stamped: VERITAS! And that means TRUTH! And that means my honor is defined by my integrity and my integrity is defined by my truth! And I defy you—here and now—to produce one shred of evidence to support your wild and defamatory claims! Shit! You better check the resumé two times before

STUPID AND STUPID

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCAHOT

you starr tryin' ta sweep your dirt under a Roman's rug! I am clean like Dove and Ready for Love, missy! I live in Heaven! Where you live at, girlfriend? Shit! I'll tell you what, though: When you get your head straightened out, gimme a call some time if you want to—I'll take you down to the Aqueduct for a Pizza and a Tussle. Show you my tattoos . . . Any more questions?

CUNNINGHAM: I think, Mister Pilate, that you've told us all we need to know.

PILATE: Okay, then, I'm a roll out, now, boo—work on my short game.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: The witness is excused.

PILATE (*smirking off magisterially*): Hail Caesar, baby!

EL-FAYOUMI rises.

EL-FAYOUMI: Your Excellency! "Hedg-e-mon"! Just one question if I may!

PILATE: What's that?

EL-FAYOUMI: Yes . . . I wonder if you would tell the court—Hedge—the following: If indeed Judas Iscariot came to your tent to recant—and I'm not saying he did or didn't—and by the way, the only Gospel that says *anything* at all about Judas recanting is Matthew, so it's three against one and the one in question was not only a Greek, but a drunken Greek and a card chear—but anyway—please tell us now if you will

please: Good Sir, Hedge, when Judas came to your tent to allegedly recant, if in fact he did, which, I am in no way seeking confirmation of herewith, *HOWEVER*, if, by chance, the gin-soaked Greek was miraculously correct and Judas did in fact attempt to recant and return the tarnished silver, tell us please—*AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT*—Hedge: Did you get the sense or impression that Judas was

recanting out of a genuine *REMORSE* and concern for Jesus, or do you think he was seeking to undo the damage out of a neck-savng *fear* of the dire consequences and everlasting repercussions of betraying Our Rightful and most Exalted and Just Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of Man? . . .

Betz.

PILATE: I am a man—and defense counsel may dispute this—who happens to know something about Remorse—personal and otherwise. In my day, I stared into the eyes of perhaps ten thousand accused men and sat in judgment of them. I spared a few, and executed plenty. I sent people to face the whip, the cell, the gallows, and the cross. And I sent a few home, as well. Remorse is rare, but when you see it, it is unmistakable. Judas Iscariot had no Remorse—His Fear left no room for it. His Fear was one hundred percent Ego-Driven and Self-Serving. One hundred percent panic. Zero percent remorse. If you believe nothing else—believe that.

EL-FAYOUMI: "Hedge"—thank you. Thank you, indeed.

The gavel bangs.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next witness!

CUNNINGHAM rises.

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, Defense reconjures Satan to the stand.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Lou, you can come in now . . . Bailiff! Go fetch him! Go fetch Satan!

BAILIFF: Alone?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Go!

SATAN enters, quite perturbed.

Ah! . . . Have a seat, Lou.

SATAN: I want to file a formal fuckin' complaint, Frank!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Aw, this ain't about the turkey roll in the cafeteria again, now, is it, Lou?

SATAN: No, Frank, this is not about the turkey roll in the cafeteria. What this is about, Frank, is I recognized a couple of your court officers at the vending machines, okay? Ask me how I recognized them, Frank.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Lou—
Satan: No! Don't you fuckin' "Lou" me—you little fag—

God's been fuckin' stealing souls again, hasn't he?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: El-Fayoumy! Escort the jury out!

EL-FAYOUMY: Yes. Right this way, please.

SATAN (*to BUTCH, as EL-FAYOUMY leads them out*): And you! Honeywell! You're on my fuckin' list, hayseed—so don't expect any last-second reprieves. Shorts and tank tops, Stretch—pack light!

They exit.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: This is unacceptable behavior, Lou.
SATAN: Don't tell me what's unacceptable—Those two court officers were mine, Frank—their souls in Hell, safe and secure! What? I don't got enough to contend with?—now I gotta deal with God cruisin' the barnyards of Hell poaching condemned poultry like some kind of silver-fox-tailed thief in the fuckin' night? This is bullshit, Frank, and you know it—and I'm not leaving here this time without my satisfaction—so you better do something about it right fucking now!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: This is unacceptable behavior, Lou.
SATAN: Your complaint is duly noted and will be kicked upstairs at the conclusion of today's testimony, okay? Now I need to call the damn jury back in here. And what I need to know—from the both of youse—is that when I move to do

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Do something like what?

SATAN: Number One: I'm not testifying at any more of these circle jerks no more—I'm not some wind-up doll to be summoned and dismissed like a fuckin' toy. Number Two: I want two souls before I leave here today—so take a memo, and pass it on upstairs. I'll take you and whoever.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Me?

SATAN: Yeah, you. I shoulda claimed you off the dung heap after Lee's surrender . . . And I want some Darvon . . . And a tall bourbon neat.

(To CUNNINGHAM): What the fuck are you looking at?

CUNNINGHAM: I'd like to start my questioning.

SATAN: Why? You gor some place you gora be, dishtagg?

CUNNINGHAM: No. When you're done crying, just let me know.

SATAN: Um, I'm sorry—maybe you can clear this up for me—but is today "Fuck-With-Someone-Who-Can-Rip-Your-Heart-Out-Through-Your-Miserable-Dried-Up-Cunt Day"?

Is that what day this is? 'Cuz, unless I'm mistaken, I'm pretty sure that Today is not that Day.

CUNNINGHAM: Today is your day to answer my questions—when you're through behaving like a pertulant child, that is.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham! Cunningham, I am directing you to hit the off-switch on them flapping gums of yours until further notice! And you, Lou, with all due respect to your stature and station—could ya cut me a break here, please?

SATAN: Frank, I've always been good to you—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: —and I to you—is that not so? Now listen: Your complaint is duly noted and will be kicked upstairs at the conclusion of today's testimony, okay? Now I need to call the damn jury back in here. And what I need to know—from the both of youse—is that when I move to do

so, that you two will conduct yourselves with a deportment in adjustment to the solemnity of these proceedings. Now, can I have your words on that?

CUNNINGHAM: I'm ready to proceed, Your Honor.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: With civility?

CUNNINGHAM: If I'm met with civility.

SATAN: You know what, Cunningham? All those excuses you gor wedged between that dubious cleavage of yours: your mother, the bulimia, the herpes, the boozes, the abortions, the rape, the bipolar pharmaceutical adventures, the twin suicide attempts and the abject failures at every relationship you ever attempted—all those things do nothing to Band-Aid the simple fact that There Comes a Time When the World Stops Rewarding Potential—and when that time came for you, you threw yourself the world's biggest pity party and dedicated the rest of your short, pathetic, inconsequential life to finding fault everywhere fuckin' else but in the return gaze of your own cosmetically altered reflection. Okay?

EL-FAYOUMY: Satan, please—you are perhaps out of bounds here! SATAN, El-Fayoumy, on a good day, your cock measures three and a half inches erect and it goes off on a hair trigger if you so much as sneeze . . . Worse than that, you're a Flatterer, and your Love of God is utterly false—as is your hair color. And the sole reason you're so hot for this nasty train wreck over here is because you're addicted to tragedy and punishment—not because you *think* you're a piece of shit, but because, El-Fayoumy, the truth is: Your self-diagnosis is correct: You're a bag of hot air and a weakling—and you will never, ever, be loved.

(*To Cunningham*): You'll never be loved either, Cunningham, and that's because you're incapable of giving it—but you already knew that about yourself, didn't you?

(*To Judge*): You can bring in the jury now, Frank. Never let it be said that the Prince of Tyre stood in the way of Truth.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*To SATAN*): No more outbursts.

SATAN: I'm a buddha floating on a lily pad.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD (*Calling out*): El-Fayoumy—bring 'em on in!

EL-FAYOUMY: Uh . . . Sir, yes, sir, sir!

EL-FAYOUMY opens door. (*To jury*): Take your seats, please—Do not tarry.

Jury enters.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Counselor, you may begin.

CUNNINGHAM: Mister Saran—

SATAN: I apologize for my earlier behavior, counselor—I had some bad fish at lunch.

CUNNINGHAM: Mister Saran, you've had a long-standing feud with God, correct?

SATAN: No, I love God.

CUNNINGHAM: You love God?

SATAN: Very much. God made me.

CUNNINGHAM: Okay, you say God made you—

SATAN: God did make me—it says so in the Bible.

CUNNINGHAM: I know about the Bible, Mister Saran. It also says in the Bible, in . . . in Matthew I believe. In Matthew, it says: "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit," correct?

SATAN: Correct.

CUNNINGHAM: So are you saying that you are good? Or are you saying that God is bad?

SATAN: I would never say that God is bad.

CUNNINGHAM: So, then, are you telling this court that you're good?

SATAN: I don't know—arc you good, Counselor?

CUNNINGHAM: That's not what I asked you!

SATAN: I'm sorry.

CUNNINGHAM: Just answer the question.

SATAN: I don't believe in Good and Bad. What I believe in is Truth.

CUNNINGHAM: Fine. According to Job and Nehemiah, God created you in the first three days. True?

SATAN: True.

CUNNINGHAM: You were an "Angel."

SATAN: True.

CUNNINGHAM: You were present when God created Earth.

SATAN: True.

CUNNINGHAM: Then God created man and gave him—not you—dominion over the Earth. True?

SATAN: True.

CUNNINGHAM: You were, in fact, ordered by God to serve man. True?

SATAN: True.

CUNNINGHAM: According to Genesis and Ezekiel, you then tempted Eve to eat the Apple in order to prove to God that He had made an error in giving Man dominion over the Earth. At which point, according to Luke, you then "fell from Heaven like lightning" and became God's Adversary.

And ever since that day, you have competed for Souls with God in order to try to prove the point that Man is not worthy to rule over the Earth. Isn't that true, Mister Satan?!

SATAN: I don't compete with God. God competes with himself.

CUNNINGHAM: That's not what I asked you.

SATAN: I'm trying to answer your question—

CUNNINGHAM: No, you are not trying to answer my question! SATAN: Your Honor, I'm trying to form a response here—

STEPHEN ADY GARGES

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Let him answer, Cunningham!

EL-FAYOUMY: Your Honor, it does seem to me—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Quiet! (*To SATAN*): Proceed.

SATAN: Thank you. Look, I didn't make you people, God did, okay? But there was a design flaw in the creation: He gave you Free Will—and to balance that out, you were designed to *Self-Correct*. But, unlike the "Free-Will" muscle, the "Self-Correct" muscle is not a particular favorite of the *Homo sapiens*. I'd say "*Self-Correct*" falls somewhere between "Colonoscopy" and "Firing Squad" on most people's holiday "wishes" lists. At any rate, the truth is: I don't have to actively compete for human souls—I don't have to lull or flatter or tempt or deceive—because with God at the helm and you people running around wreaking havoc: I'll be honest, I spend most of my time on a sofa watching one-hour dramas on HBO.

CUNNINGHAM: And what? Getting tossed out of Heaven—that didn't bother you at all?

SATAN: There's a concept, Cunningham, called Playing the Cards You Are Dealt—One can either accept that concept or one can slowly lose one's mind, heart, and soul. I'd like to be more helpful to you here, but really, that's what it all comes down to.

CUNNINGHAM: Is that so?

SATAN: I'm just a fallen angel tryin' ta keep my dick hard in a monotheistic society—anything else you wanna ask?

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, this witness is clearly lying—I move that his entire testimony be stricken from the record.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I'll not allow that, sorry—you conjured him, what comes out of his mouth is your responsibility.

CUNNINGHAM: But he's obviously lying!

SATAN: You oughta expand your consciousness, Counselor.

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor!

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THE LAST DAYS OF JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

EXHIBIT 1
Part 6
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Unless you have another question,
Cunningham, I suggest you step down now.

CUNNINGHAM: But—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Forward or Back! You've been instructed,
now what'll it be?

A small beat.

CUNNINGHAM: Why do you love God, Mister Satan?

SATAN: What's not to love?

CUNNINGHAM: Specifically, Mister Satan! What specifically do
you love about God?

SATAN: I don't know where to begin.

CUNNINGHAM: Pick a spot!

SATAN: I love God because He is All-Powerful and All-
Forgiving. I love God because his Justice is perfect. I love
God because God loves me.

CUNNINGHAM: God loves you?

SATAN: Very much. Gift basket at Christmas—Hallmark
Greetings on all the major holidays.

CUNNINGHAM: Stop it! If God loves you, then why did he
throw you out of his Kingdom?

SATAN: He didn't throw me out—I left.

CUNNINGHAM: That's not what it says in the Bible!

SATAN: Yeah, they fudged that part, you're right—but that's
because you people really only respond to fear and threat—if
they told you straight up that there was no lock to the Gates
of Heaven, then you'd have no incentive at all to even try to
be halfway decent.

CUNNINGHAM: In other words, God lied!

SATAN: God didn't write the Bible—you do know that, right?

CUNNINGHAM: Of course I know that!

SATAN: Then why would you say that God lied?
CUNNINGHAM: Mister Satan—does God love Judas Iscariot?
Yes or No?

SATAN: God loves everybody.

CUNNINGHAM: And yet Judas is in Hell—so what use is God's
Love to Judas if my client is allowed to languish in Damnation?
SATAN: Your client is free to leave whenever he wants to—in
fact, I wish he would—I could use the room.

CUNNINGHAM: That's not true and you know it!

SATAN: Look, maybe you should sit down and catch your
breath—

CUNNINGHAM: —The real truth is that God's Love for us is
Conditional—isn't that right? You failed to meet God's
conditions, and he threw you in the trash! Judas failed—and
he's in a catatonic stupor!

SATAN: Your client succumbed to Despair—
CUNNINGHAM: Yes! And if Human Despair is so powerful as to
render God powerless over it, then what does that say about
God?! It says one of two things, Mister Satan: Either God's
not All-Powerful and therefore useless—or—God's Love is
Conditional, which renders that Love false and Unworthy!
Which one is it?

SATAN: Cunningham, please don't take this personally, but
your father never really loved you or wanted you, right? And
the only reason your mother didn't abort you was because
she was afraid of scarring—I think she told you that once,
didn't she—

CUNNINGHAM: Mister Satan!—

SATAN: —Just because your parents resented you doesn't mean
that God does.

CUNNINGHAM: —Mister Satan, I asked you a direct question
and I am demanding from you a direct answer!

SATAN: The direct answer is that you are completely wrong.

CUNNINGHAM: Is God Powerless or Spiteful—I am ordering you to answer!

Cunningham—not God.

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor, he's not answering!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Whaddya want me to do about it?

CUNNINGHAM: But he's not answering!

SATAN: Open your heart to God, Cunningham.

CUNNINGHAM: Shut up! (*To JUDGE*) Your Honor!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: I suggest you step down, Cunningham.

CUNNINGHAM: But I'm not finished!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Then finish!

CUNNINGHAM: But Your Honor, this isn't fair!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: It is what it is, Cunningham!

CUNNINGHAM: But Your Honor—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Cunningham—

CUNNINGHAM: Your Honor—

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: What, Cunningham? What?

Pause.

CUNNINGHAM (*To SATAN*): You're a fuckin' liar!

SATAN: I'm truly sorry you feel that way.

Pause.

CUNNINGHAM: . . . Nothing further.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: El-Fayoumy: Gross!

CUNNINGHAM.

EL-FAYOUMY *sweeps CUNNINGHAM, then SATAN, then back to CUNNINGHAM.*

EL-FAYOUMY: No cross. No.

Judas.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: You're excused.

SATAN: Thanks, Frank.

(*To the lawyer*): Counselors: You availed yourselves as expected. And by the way, El-Fayoumy, you're completely wrong, too. I'll be in touch.

And he is gone.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD: Next witness!

Blackout. A beat.

JE^SU^S *makes his way to JUDAS. He speaks to us.*

JE^SU^S: Right now, I am in Fallujah. I am in Darfur. I am on Sixty-third and Park having dinner with Ellen Barkin and Ron Perelman . . . Right now, I'm on Lafayette and Astor waiting to hit you up for change so I can get high. I'm taking a walk through the Rose Garden with George Bush. I'm helping Donald Rumsfeld get a good night's sleep . . . I was in that cave with Osama, and on that plane with Mohamed Atta . . . And what I want you to know is that your work has barely begun. And what I want you to *trust* is the efficacy of divine love if practiced consciously. And what I need you to *believe* is that if you hate who I love, you do not know me at all. And make no mistake, "Who I Love" is every last one. I *am* every last one. People ask of me: Where are you? Where are you? . . . Verily I ask of you to ask yourself: Where are *you*? Where are *you*?

Judas.

No response.

Judas.

BEST. JUDAS slowly emerges from his frozen state of catatonia.

JUDAS: Who's that?

JESUS: Is it ever anybody else, Judas?

Pause.

I miss you.

JUDAS: Uh-huh.

JESUS: I miss you, Judas.

JESUS lays a hand on him.

JUDAS: DON'T FUCKIN' TOUCH ME!

JESUS: Judas.

JUDAS: I SAID TAKE YOUR FUCKIN' HANDS OFF ME—
TAKE 'EM OFF!

JESUS: I'm sorry. I'm—

JUDAS: —JUST BACK OFF MY GRILL, MAN! BACK OFF!

JESUS: I'm sorry.

JUDAS: BACK OFF MORE!

JESUS: I'm sorry.

Pause.

Judas: If a thousand strangers spit on me and kick me as they pass, I will smile. But if the brother of my heart gives me only a passing hard look, then, Judas—I will not sleep that night, nor sleep—at all—till he will let me love him again.

JUDAS: NO!!

JESUS: No, what?

JUDAS: No more fuckin' fortune cookies, that's what! You wanna say something, I can't stop you—you wanna

apologize, fine, apologize and go, just—for once—speak like a normal fuckin' person!

JESUS: I'm not a normal person, Judas, and I'm not here to apologize. I am who I am and not what you demand me to be. I'm always going to be who I am and what I am, and when have you ever heard me deliver my message any differently, Judas? When?

JUDAS: I . . . Just, go away.

JESUS: I won't go away.

JUDAS: Well, that'd be a first.

JESUS: I have never gone away, Judas . . . Look at me.

JUDAS does.

I love you, Judas. And all I want—all I want—is to be not just near you—but *with* you.

JUDAS: Shoulda thought of that before.

JESUS: Before what?

JUDAS: Just ger the fuck outta here, okay?

JESUS: Judas—

JUDAS: Don't fuckin' Judas me—*You're not wanted here*, okay,

Mister Fuckin'-Above-It-All!!

JESUS: I'm not above it all—I'm right here in it, don't you see that?

JUDAS: *And don't you get that I don't fuckin' care?!*
JESUS: You think your suffering is a one-way street? It's not! It's the exact opposite of not!

JUDAS: You got a lot of fuckin' nerve—
JESUS: —and you've got no nerve at all! Where's your *heart* in all this, Judas? You think you were with me for any other reason than that? It was your heart, Judas. You were *all heart*. You were my heart! Don't you know that?!

JUDAS: I'll tell you what I know: I watched you trip over your

own dusky feet to heal the sick, the blind, the lame, the unclean—any two-bit stranger stubbed their fuckin' toe! When some lowly distant relative—too cheap to buy enough wine for his own fuckin' wedding—suddenly runs out of booze—no problem, you just “presto change-o”—and it was fuckin’ Miller time in ol’ Canaan again, wasn’t it, bro?! But when I fuckin’ needed you—where the fuck were you, huh?!

JESUS: Judas—
JUDAS: You forgave Peter and bullshit Thomas—you knocked Paul of Tarsus off a horse—you raised Lazarus from the fuckin’ dead—but me? Me? Your “heart”? . . . *What about me??!! What about me, Jesus?!! Huh?!* You just, you just—I made a mistake! And if that was wrong, then you should have told me! And if a broken heart wasn’t sufficient reason to hang, THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME THAT, TOO!

JESUS: Don’t you think . . . that if I knew that it would have changed your mind . . . that I would have?

Pause.

JUDAS: All I know is that you broke me unfixable—and that I’m here . . . And, you wanna know when you delivered your message differently? At the Temple, Jesus—that’s when. And you were beautiful there. And you left there three inches taller. And we all saw it. I loved you. That’s all I did. And that’s the truth. And now I’m here.

JESUS: Judas—What if I were to tell you that you are not here? That you are with me in my Kingdom even now, and that you have been there since the morning of my Ascension and that you have never left?

JUDAS *sits in JESUS’s face.*

JUDAS: That’s what I think about you.

JESUS *doesn’t wipe it off.*

JESUS: I love you, Judas.

Pause.

I love you.

JUDAS: *Just stop!*

JESUS: Don’t you see me here, Judas?

JUDAS: *I see a lot of things!*

JESUS: You see aotta things?

JUDAS: *That’s right!*

JESUS: How about him? Do you see him?

SATAN appears.

Do you know him? Call unto him. Touch him. He is not there. Because he does not exist, Judas. Rather, they must conjure him, and still he is but a vapor blown away by a hummingbird’s breath. He is false. He is a lie. He is not real. Touch him. Go ahead.

JUDAS: I don’t wanna touch him.

JESUS: Stand up, Judas.

JUDAS: You know I can’t do that!

JESUS: No. What I know—is that you can.

JUDAS: Get the fuck over yourself!

JESUS: Will you feed my lambs, Judas? . . . Will you take care of my little sheep? . . . Will you feed my lambs?!

JUDAS: “Feed your lambs”?

JESUS: You know exactly what I’m asking you.

JUDAS: Go away!

JESUS: If you don't love me, Judas—then you're gonna have to look me in my eyes and say it.

JUDAS: I don't love you.

JESUS: If you don't love me, then why are you here?

JUDAS: Go!

JESUS: Judas! . . . Judas, don't you know what would happen the very instant you got down on your knees?

JUDAS: Why on my knees? They shoulda buried me standing up—'cuz I been on my knees my whole life! You left me.

JUDAS is slowly reverting to his frozen catatonic state.

JESUS: I'm right here.

JUDAS: I would have never believed that you could have left me.

JESUS: I never left you.

JUDAS: That you didn't love me.

JESUS: I do love you.

JUDAS: Why . . . didn't you make me good enough . . . so that you could've loved me?

JESUS: . . . Please take my hands, Judas. Please.

JUDAS: Where are they?

JESUS: Right here.

JUDAS: I can't see them.

JESUS: They're right here.

JUDAS: *Where are you going?*

JESUS: I'm right here.

JUDAS: *Don't leave me!*

JESUS: I'm here.

JUDAS: I can't hurt . . .

JESUS: I love you, Judas.

JUDAS: I can't . . .

JESUS: Please stay.

JUDAS: I can't hurt . . .

JESUS: Please love me, Judas.

JUDAS: I can't.

JUDAS is frozen again.

A long beat.

BUTCH HONEYWELL enters JUDAS's fair with a twelve-pack of Canadian beer. BUTCH looks around, clears his throat, takes off his cap.

BUTCH HONEYWELL: Um, uh, Mister Iscariot? Uh, Mister Iscariot, I, uh, I don't know if you can hear me, but, I just—I just wanted to introduce myself, if, if I could. I'm, uh, Butch Honeywell. I was the foreman of the jury at your trial there . . . and . . . well, we found you guilty, Mister Iscariot . . . I'm real sorry about that . . . Oh, uh . . . I brought you a twelve-pack of beer. Actually, guess it's a five-pack now, but, anyway . . . Here, I don't know if you drink beer, but it's good stuff . . . Anyways, I'll just set it down right beside you right here . . . Okay then.

BUTCH goes to leave, then stops.

. . . So . . . I think I'm dead, Mister Iscariot, and, I'm a little concerned about that 'cuz I don't think my soul's ready for judgment, but nobody else has so far corroborated that I'm dead so, I just don't bring it up, but, the fact is that if this is a dream, it's the longest damn dream I've ever endured—and really, I just . . . I really miss my wife, Mister Iscariot. Is it okay if I tell you that?

Bent. BUTCH pops a beer. Sips. Pauses.

I remember, I was with these two girls that night, when I first seen my wife, Mister Iscariot. It was a party at Jimmy Rayburn's house 'cuz Jimmy's momma worked till midnight so he had the house to himself, and, you know, me and these two girls—Suzie Heller and Della Mac Robbins—we were just talkin', smokin' cigarettes, out on Mrs. Rayburn's deck away from the party. I was depressed over sumpin' or other—polly 'cuz school was ending—plus I had just been in the school play—I had played Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*—it was the first time I had ever acted, and everyone said I was real good. But now, the play was over, and school was almost over, and, for the part in the play, they had given me this real short haircut—like 1940s style—and my ears, Mister Iscariot, I don't know if you can notice, but, they stick out a little bit, so, with the short haircut and all, I was feeling a little self-conscious and dumb, and, anyway, just not too cheery . . . So anyways, I'm out there on the deck talkin' to Suzie and Della—and all a sudden I see this girl inside at the party. She had, I guess, just arrived, and she had on a red jacket. It was a cheerleading jacket from the high school just across the state line in Virginia—The Red Raiders—and I remember, all I saw was blonde hair, and a red jacker, and this smile that was—even from a distance—just kinda electrifying to the heart, ya know? 'Bout a minute later, the sliding door to the deck opens, and this girl, she comes out by herself, and she's heading towards us—turns our she's friends with Della from back in the day, from, I don't know, Girl Scouts, Brownies, sumpin' like that. Anyways, she walks over—and she was so beautiful, that I remember thinkin' to myself—and this is exactly word for word what I thought—"I ain't even gonna bother talkin' to this girl." So she comes over, says hello, and I just excuse myself right off the deck and head back inside,

fixin' ta say my "good byes" and skedaddle . . . And anyways, I try to leave, but then, Jimmy handed me a beer, and someone else started passin' a bottle of Rebel Yell, and before you know it, you know, bong hits and whatnot, and anyways a little later I'm sittin' on the couch when this girl—my future wife—she just comes up to me by herself and she says: "I saw you in that play the other night. You made me cry" . . . Two days later, we went out on a date . . . On the way back, I was driving her home, and we passed by this house where my friend Dave Hoghe used to live who had died . . . I hadn't been by his house since he passed. The family didn't live there no more. But when I saw the house, I got struck with this feeling, and I asked her if she wouldn't mind if we just pulled up in front of that house and just sat for a moment. She said: "Sure." So I parked, and we just sat in the car for a while. Quiet. Nor sayin' nothin'. And before I knew it, Mister Iscariot, I was rearing up—"cuz this kid, he had been a real good friend of mine, ya know—and then, I just started crying, Mister Iscariot. I couldn't help myself and I couldn't shut it off. And I was real embarrassed, and she just held me while tears and snot and wharnor just poured outta me and onto her little white sweater . . . And she didn't mind about that . . . She didn't mind at all . . . At some point, I drove her home, and we got to her door, and we started to kiss, and, well, God, it was like, I'll tell ya—it was like peaches and dynamite . . . And before I left, I apologized to her about the crying and all, and she said: "Don't be a jackass, Butch Honeywell," and I smiled, but then I went on to explain my meaning, which was—you know—if you want a girl to think you're sensitive or something, then maybe taking her to the house of your dead friend and crying all-over her pretty white sweater might be a good way to pull it off, and, you know what

she said, Mister Iscariot? . . . She looked at me for a good long while with them all the way dazzling eyes of hers and then she just said: "Well, if it was a trick . . . then I'm tricked" . . . Three years into our marriage, I took a job teaching at the State College—I was popular with the students 'cuz I found a way to make 'em wanna learn. One night, at the end of the semester, they took me out for beers. I ended up havin' an assignation with one of the coeds—young lady named Lucy. And I went home that night, got into bed next to my wife drunk as a skunk and I remember, before I passed out, I was lookin' at her. I always liked to look at her when she was sleeping 'cuz she always looked so good. I had a little nickname for her, I useta call her "my little baby dinosaur," 'cuz that's how she looked like when she slept—like one of those cute cartoon little baby dinosaurs—like a little brontosaurus, but curc . . . Anyways, when I woke up the next mornin', she was still sleepin', and what I had done the night before came back to me, and I looked at my wife, and, boy, she looked exactly the same as always, but, somehow, she just wasn't my little baby dinosaur no more, ya know? And she woke up, and she didn't know nuthin' 'bout nuthin', and everything was exactly the same as if the night before had never happened, except, it wasn't the same, and I knew it. And I had no idea why I had done what I done. But I had done it. And it couldn't be changed. My girl, she got up and fixed blueberry French toast with maple walnut pecans. I didn't eat it. No way I coulda eaten it. Nuthin' was ever the same after that morning, Mister Iscariot, ya know? I tried a lot of things to make it better, the only thing that did was more beer and women . . . Do you know who W. H. Auden was, Mister Iscariot? W. H. Auden was a poet who once said: "God may reduce you on Judgement Day to tears of shame, reciting by

heart the poems you would have written, had your life been good" . . . She was my poem, Mister Iscariot. Her and the kids. But mostly . . . her . . . You cashed in Silver, Mister Iscariot, but me? Me, I threw away Gold. . . . That's a fact. That's a natural fact.

A long bent.

JESUS sighs, takes off his shirt, plunges it in the bucket, rinses it, and begins to wash JUDAS's feet. JESUS washes methodically and with care. He washes. And washes. Perhaps the water is mixed with tears.

Lights fade.

The end

Acknowledgments

Much Grateful Thanks Firstly to the Following: The
LAByrinth Theater Company, George C. Wolfe, Mara Manus,
Michael Hurst, Peter Dubois, Irene Cabrera, Celise Kalke,
Steven Showalter, Jordan Thaler, Heidi Griffiths, Kenneth
Leslie and all the ushers and staff at The Public Theater;
Marieke Gaboury, Sallie D. Sanders, Amanda Woods, Abby
Marcus, Veronica R. Bainbridge, Monique Carboni, Brian
Roff, Michael Almereyda, Terrence Morris, Robin L. Cook,
John Conrado, Courtney Werzel, Ashley Hanna, Florencia
Lozano, Chris Rubino, Monica Moore, Maddalena Deichman,
Andromache Chalfant, Mimi O'Donnell, Japhy Weideman,
Darron L. West, Madonna Badger, Kimberly Braswell, Colin
Calender, David Deblinger, Michael J. Fine, Julie Haddad,
Ruth Hendl, Jeffrey A. Horwitz, Margo Lion, John Marcus,
Ricardo E. Oquendo, Daryl Roth, John Gould Rubin, Carlo
Albani, Simone Allmen, Vanessa Aspillaga, Liche Ariza, Dick
Benedek, Maggie Bofill, John Buzzetti, Elizabeth Canavan,
Andrea Ciancarel, Rebecca Cohen, Beth Cole, Alexis
Coucher, Billy Crudup, Kim Director, Faber and Faber, Rev.
Dr. James A. Forbes Jr. of the Riverside Church, the Gersh
Agency, Bob Glaudini, Charles Goforth, Robyn Goodman,
Marie Therese Guirgis, Maurice and Therese Guirgis, Mark
Hammer, HBO Films, Ron Cephas Jones, Jen Konawal, Diane
Landers, Brett C. Leonard, Trevor Long, MCC Playwrights'

Coalition, Chris McGarry, Sara Murphy, New River Dramatists and Mark Woods and Meir Ribalow and Big Bill Baker in Healing Springs, North Carolina, Dierdre O'Connell, Ana Ortiz, Sarah Almond, Denise Oswald, Richie Petrocelli, Michael Pitt, Ira Pittelman, Portia, Father Raymond Rafferty of Corpus Christi Church, Joscelyn Reyes, Nancy Rose and Ira Shreck, Brendan Sexton, John Patrick Shanley, Marshall Sharer, Jamey Sheridan, Todd Solondz, Erana Stennett, Arielle Tepper, Sister Mary Tyler O.P., Sam Wilsche, David Zayas, and Emily Ziff.

Secondly: I can't even imagine what writing this play would have been like without the theological advice and spiritual guidance of Father Jim Martin, S.J. My mom always says that back in the day, Priests were Men of God who were Our Friends. Father Jim was exactly that. His knowledge, enthusiasm, and gentle caring was essential not only to my writing process, but to the rehearsals and the production as well. Father Jim is a real priest, a real man, and the Real Deal.

Thirdly: Philip Seymour Hoffman. Incredible director. Trusted collaborator. Treasured friend.

Fourthly: John Ortiz. The other blessing of my creative life. His confidence and faith in me since we were kids is a debt I can never repay. All heart. Gigantic.

Fifthly: The Original Cast. Sam Rockwell and Yul Vazquez committed to the play before there was a script and never hedged. Liza Colón-Zayas, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Yetta Gortesman, and Craig "Mums" Grant committed on, like, Page 9. Eric Bogosian signed on at about page 20. Jeffrey DeMunn took a leap of faith and said yes based on a reading (page 50?) and a phone call. The great Adrian Martinez endured an audition, even though we had already worked together once before. John Ortiz stayed in town—and in debt—to play Jesus, even when Jesus had no lines. Salvatore

Inzerillo asked me if he'd at least get to play a part “with some meat on the bone.” I said: “Probably not.” Sal said yes anyway. Stephen McKinley Henderson was the steal of the draft. Deborah Rush and Kohl Sudduth gave incredible auditions and then said yes to supporting and still developing roles in an unfinished script. Callie Thorne was the last actor we saw, just a few days before the first rehearsal. I can't really remember her audition, but I'll never forget her performance and her commitment. I can never ever thank these actors enough. They were all unique and beautiful, fierce, committed, talented, willing, and generous. Truly.

Lastly and most important: God. I struggle with God. I struggle with Life. I want simple answers and easy solutions. I want to do it on my own and always be in control. Mostly, I want to avoid the uncomfortable, which only leads to more discomfort. God is, I think, perhaps, The Unavoidable, and writing, for me, is the curse that brings me a little bit closer to that Unavoidable entity that ultimately allows me freedom and access to my work and to my life. Some people are curious about a writer's “creative process.” I can't explain mine except to say that God is the starting point and the finish line. In other words, when all else fails—and it always does—I pray.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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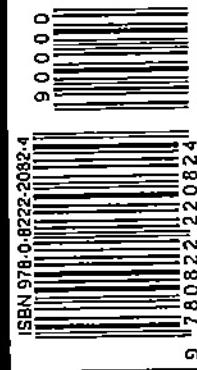
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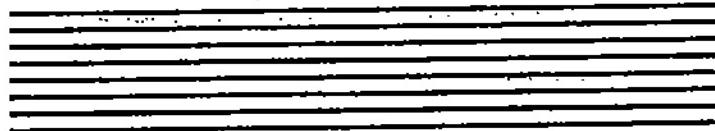
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THE LAST DAYS OF
JUDAS ISCARIOT

BY STEPHEN ADLY GURGIS



*
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Labyrinth Theater Company production of *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*.
Kohl Sudduth, Sam Rockwell and John Ortiz in a scene from the

Set design by Andromache Chalifour
Photo by Matthew Ciarbo



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 was originally produced by
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Philip Seymour Hoffman and John Ortiz, Co-Artistic Directors
 and The Public Theatre,
 Mara Manus, Executive Director; George C. Wolfe, Producer,
 February 2005.

*In memory of
 Nicole DuFrene (1977 – 2005)
 and
 Terrence Morris (1974 – 2005)*
R.I.P.

CHARACTERS

SATAN	SATAN
GLORIA	GLORIA
MOTHER TERESA	MOTHER TERESA
JUDGE	JUDGE
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER	CAIAPHAS THE ELDER
SAIN'T MATTHEW	SAIN'T MATTHEW
LORETTA	LORETTA
MARY MAGDALENE	MARY MAGDALENE
SISTER GLENNNA	SISTER GLENNNA
PONTIUS PILATE	PONTIUS PILATE
UNCLE PINO	UNCLE PINO
BAILIFF	BAILIFF
SIMON THE ZEALOT	SIMON THE ZEALOT
SIGMUND FREUD	SIGMUND FREUD
MATTHIAS OF GALILEE	MATTHIAS OF GALILEE
SAINT THOMAS	SAINT THOMAS
JESUS OF NAZARETH	JESUS OF NAZARETH
JUDAS ISCARIOT	JUDAS ISCARIOT
SAINT MONICA, SOLDIER 3	SAINT MONICA, SOLDIER 3
HENRIETTA ISCARIOT	HENRIETTA ISCARIOT
BUTCH HONEYWELL	BUTCH HONEYWELL
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM	FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY	YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY
MATTHIAS OF GALILEE	MATTHIAS OF GALILEE
SAINT PETER, SOLDIER 2	SAINT PETER, SOLDIER 2
Craig "muMs" Grant	Craig "muMs" Grant
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM	FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY	YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY
SOLDIERS	SOLDIERS

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT was originally produced by LAByrinth Theater Company (Philip Seymour Hoffman and John Ortiz, Co-Artistic Directors) and The Public Theater (Mara Manus, Executive Director; George C. Wolfe, Producer) in New York City, opening on March 2, 2005. It was directed by Philip Seymour Hoffman; the set design was by Andromache Chalfant; the costume design was by Mimi O'Donnell; the lighting design was by Japhy Weidman; the sound design was by Darren L. West; the production stage manager was Monica Moore; and the assistant stage manager was Maddalena Deichmann. The cast was as follows:

SATAN	Eric Bogosian
GLORIA, MOTHER TERESA	Liza Colon-Zayas
JUDGE, CAIAPHAS THE ELDER,	
SAINT MATTHEW	Jeffrey DeMunn
LORETTA, MARY MAGDALENE,	
SISTER GLENNNA	Yetta Grossman
PONTIUS PILATE,	
UNCLE PINO	Stephen McKinley Henderson
BAILIFF SIMON THE ZEALOT	Sal Inzerillo
SIGMUND FREUD, SAINT THOMAS,	
SOLDIER 1	Adrian Martinez
JESUS OF NAZARETH	John Ortiz
JUDAS ISCARIOT	Sam Rockwell
SAINT MONICA, SOLDIER 3	Elizabeth Rodriguez
HENRIETTA ISCARIOT	Deborah Rush
BUTCH HONEYWELL	Kohl Sudduth
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM	Callie Thorne
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY	Yul Vasquez
MATTHIAS OF GALILEE	
SAINT PETER, SOLDIER 2	

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

ACT ONE

Prologue

“DOMINE ADJUVA INCREDULITATEM MEAM”

Darkness. Rain. From nowhere, a woman emerges from her past.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. No parent should have to bury a child ... No mother should have to bury a son. Mothers are not meant to bury sons. It is not in the natural order of things. I buried my son. In a Potter's field. In a field of Blood. In empty, acrid silence. There was no funeral. There were no mourners. His friends all absent. His father dead. His sisters refusing to attend. I discovered his body alone, I dug his grave alone, I placed him in a hole, and covered him with dirt and rock alone. I was not able to finish burying him before sundown, and I'm not sure if that affected his fate ... I begrudge God none of this. I do not curse him or bemoan my lot. And though my heart keeps beating only to keep breaking — I do not question why. I remember the morning my son was born as if it was yesterday. The moment the midwife placed him in my arms, I was infused with a love beyond all measure and understanding. I remember holding my son, and looking over at my own mother and saying, “Now I understand why the Sun comes up at day and the stars come out at night. I understand why rain falls gently. Now I understand, mother ...” I loved my son every day of

his life, and I will love him ferociously long after I've stopped breathing. I am a simple woman. I am not bright or learned. I do not read. I do not write. My opinions are not solicited. My voice is not important ... On the day of my son's birth I was infused with a love beyond all measure and understanding ... The world tells me that God is in heaven and that my son is in hell. I tell the world heaven — because if my son sits in hell, there is no God. (Jesus, carrying a bucket, has crossed to the woman. He kisses her cheek. She does not notice. They vanish.)

Scene 1

A COURTROOM

Court is in session. A woman with wings. Gloria, rises.

GLORIA. Between heaven and hell — there is another place. This place: Hope. Hope — is located right over here in downtown Purgatory.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

GLORIA. Now Purgatory, contrary to popular belief, has plumbing, and bedegus, and they even got a movie chearer and a little park that people can walk their dogs at. Hope — well, it ain't got none a that, and it definitely don't smell good.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case, Bailiff.

GLORIA. I worked here in Hope for two and a half years — thass how I got these wings. And I wouldn't trade nothing for these wings — I can fly with these wings! ... At night, I fly down to earth, and I march my littles babyboy sleep. He's seven, and he's got a picture of me on his wall — right in between Shaquille O'Neal and the Incredible Hulk. Then, I go fly up town to the window of my oldest babygirl's house and watch my grandchild, "Little Bir," sleep. Most nights I can see my oldest babygirl Tanya with her feer in a pot of hot water, always studying books; and I'll stick around to see her man Winston come home late at night from work, always with a muffin

or a hamburger for my Babygirl. Winston's love for my Babygirl is all over his face — I was wrong about him, I always thought he was shifty ... When I get back to Heaven, I tell my husband DeLayne all about it. DeLayne don't like to fly, but he likes to hear the stories, and he likes how I look like when I come home from earth all "wind-blown" ... Now Hope, it changes with the tumes, but has stood always as God's gift to the last of his children. It is said that every civilization rearranges the cosmic furniture differently. In Biblical times, Hope was an oasis in the desert. In medieval days, a shack free of plague. Today, Hope is no longer a place for contemplation — "Jirigan" being the preferred new order of the day:

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Where's my damn bailiff?

BAILIFF. Here, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Then call the next damn case!!!

BAILIFF. Yes, sir. God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Thorsseen the Implacable: motion to appeal!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Denied — next case!

BAILIFF. God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Henry Wayne Masters —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Nope!

BAILIFF. God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Benedict Arnold —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Aw hell no!

BAILIFF. God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Judas Iscariot —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. — Judas Iscariot?! Who brings this crap before me?!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, my name is Fabiana Aziza Cunningham —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. — Never heard of you!

CUNNINGHAM. I live in purgatory. JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Well you shoulda kept your legs closed! Motion denied! Next case!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, I have a writ signed by Saint Peter at the Gates of Heaven!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

CUNNINGHAM. But I have a writ! Bailiff. She has a writ, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Excuse me!

BAILIFF. Just saying: The lady, she's got a writ, so, I mean —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. — Bailiff: Let's set up a little signal

between the two of us, OK?

BAILIFF. OK.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Good. Now when I come to court dressed as Ethel Merman in a one-piece bathing suit, that'll be my signal to you that I want your opinion!

BAILIFF. Yes, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!!!
BAILIFF. But what about the writ, sir?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. What's your name, Bailiff?

BAILIFF. Julius of Outer Mongolia.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. You're on work-release from Purgatory, Julius — correct?

BAILIFF. Yes sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Wanna get to heaven someday? Eat fried chicken and mashed potatoes, feel the sun on your face?
BAILIFF. Very much, sir.
JUDGE. Then call the next damn case!!!

BAILIFF. Yes, sir. Absolutely, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Good. Have a lollipop.
BAILIFF. Thank you, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

BAILIFF. But, like, the writ, sir. —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Bailiff!!! (*Yusef Akbar Azziz Al-Nassar Gamel El-Fayoumy rises dramatically from his seat in the courthouse.*)
EL-FAYOUMY. (*Rising dramatically.*) Your Honor, if I may?!
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Who speaks before me?!

EL-FAYOUMY. It is I, Yusef Akbar Azziz Al-Nassar Gamel El-Fayoumy!
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Who the hell are you?!

EL-FAYOUMY. An attorney, great sir! Willing and able to prosecute this sham of a case and defend the Gates of Heaven and the Kingdom of God against this big shenanigan of a so-called writ, great handsome sir! Look no further, your Honor! Yusef Akbar Azziz Al-Nassar Gamel El-Fayoumy is a *beacon* for justice!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. A "beacon," eh?

EL-FAYOUMY. May I approach you?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. The bench, not me!

EL-FAYOUMY. The bench! Of course! Yes! — And it is a lovely bench! Splendid and sturdy like the great derriere that rests upon it! Your Honor, I received wind of this so-called "writ" several weeks ago. I have been preparing night and day to refute the alle-

gations it contains!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, let the record reflect I have no opposition to Mr. El-Fayoumy here.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (*To Fabiana.*) Speak when spoken to!!! EL-FAYOUMY. Do not bait this great man, lady! He presided over the appeal of Attila the Hun when you were nothing more than a cheap shot of whiskey on your great-great-grandfather's first unpaid bar tab!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Well said!
EL-FAYOUMY. Forgive the outburst.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. ... You got a license to practice, Mr. El-Fajita?
EL-FAYOUMY. A license? A license! Yes. Absolutely! Submitted for your most scrupulously discerning approval, eminently great sir! (*El-Fayoumy crosses, fumbles, searching his pockets for license.*)
BAILIFF. (*Cautiously.*) Sir, his name's El-Fayoumy.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. What?

BAILIFF. You called him El-Fajita.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Just gimme my glasses!

BAILIFF. You're wearing them, sir.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (*Exploding.*) My OTHER glasses!!!
BAILIFF. Oh. Here.

EL-FAYOUMY. Most worshipful Lord and Master: very tiny problem. My license, I seem to have left it in my other suit. I could rush back to hell and retrieve it —
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. From hell are you?
EL-FAYOUMY. Temporarily detained — a problem with my papers.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. You sure about that?

EL-FAYOUMY. Quite sure, your Grace. I attribute the mix-up to the Americanization of the after life — completely understandable in lieu of recent events.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. You're damn right.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes, your Eminence — as are you, great sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham! Let me see this "writ"
CUNNINGHAM. Here, your Honor. (*The judge reads the writ.*)
EL-FAYOUMY. (*An aside.*) You have great legs, Fabiana. Free for dinner, perhaps?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham! This writ is garbage! Next case!
CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, my client —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Your client is Judas Iscariot! Your client sold out the son of God for chistsakes!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, that has no bearing —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham — Judas Iscariot committed the one unforgivable sin. Everybody knows it —

EL-FAYOUMY. — The sin of despair!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. And then he did the world of favor and hung himself!

EL-FAYOUMY. From the olive branch, the coward!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, that wrir you hold in your hand is signed by Saint Peter!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I know Peter, and he's prone to error. And he's rash —

EL-FAYOUMY. Rash! Absolurely! A little place called the Garden of Gethsemane ring a bell, Fabiana? When the authorities came to arrest Jesus — after *your client* sold him out with a kiss — whar did Peter do?

CUNNINGHAM. I know whar he did.

EL-FAYOUMY. Well, know it again!!! Peter took out his sword and started chopping off the ears of the authority! Can you imagine?! Jesus had to correct him, pur the ears back on — it was a big mess, really.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

CUNNINGHAM. But your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

EL-FAYOUMY. Come Fabiana: dinner and a sensual massage — it will soothe you —

CUNNINGHAM. — Your Honor, I cite Beatitudes and Kierkegaard. I cite Christ on the cross!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I cite my foor in your ass, Cunningham!

CUNNINGHAM. I cite Hegel: Within every idea — *Thesis* — is contained its contradiction — *Antithesis* — and out of that struggle is created — *Synthesis*. Synthesis, your Honor! The union of opposites — their interdependence and their inevitable clash producung what's next — what must be revered: God's Perfect Love versus God's Rightful Justice equals what, your Honor?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. *Out of my court room!!!*

CUNNINGHAM. The synthesis of love and justice can produce only mercy and forgiveness, your Honor! If a just God sics in heaven, it can fall no other way!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

CUNNINGHAM. But your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case! *NEXT CASE!! (The gavel bangs, Blackout. Sotto voce.)* Crazy mick bitch. (*In black, we hear voices, noises, and portentous rumblings like an earthquake. Lights flash.*)

ASSISTANT STAGE MGR. (*V.O.J*) Alright now people! — cue them trumpets and the dancing camelst! (*The sounds of trumpets and dancing camels are heard. Music and wild lights.*)

SAINT MONICA. Thanks, boys! Hey, y'all. Welcome to my world ... So this is the part of the story where, if it wasn't for me, there wouldn't be no more parts to the fuckin' story, OK? My name is *Monica* — better known to you mere mortals as *Saint Monica*. Yeah, dass night, *Saint* — as in, "Better not don't get up in *my* grill cuz I'll mess your shit up cuz I'm a Saint and I got mad saundly conners," OK? You ever drove down Santa Monica Boulevard? You ever ate some sushi down the Santa Monica Pier? Well dass *my* boulevard and *my* pier, and dass all I gotta say about that — word to the wise, word is most definately B-O-N-D bond ... Anyways, (lemme catch my breath), anyways, up in heaven, a lotta peoples don't wanna hang with me cuz they say I'm a "nag." It's true. And you know what I say abour that? I say; "Fuck them bitches," cuz — you know what — I *am* a Nag, and if I wasn't a Nag, I wouldn't never made it to be no saint, 'and the church wouldn't a had no Father of the Church named Saint Augustine — cuz I birthed the mothahfuckin' ah, raised Him, and when he started messin' up, like, all the time and constantly, I nagged God's ass to save him! I nagged and nagged and nagged and nagged till God got so tired of my shit that he did save my son, and my son — Saint Augustine — he stopped bangin' whores and sippin' on some wine and he became learned, so fuckin' learned that he's known as one of the Fathers of the Church, and you could look that shit up! Go ahead, look it up right now, I'll wait! ... Dass right: "Father Up In This Mothahfuckkah!" "Father of the Church" — got a plaque and everything! So if I hadn't been a Nag, All a Y'all niggas woulda been a bastard church, so, sip on dat, bitches! ... Anyways, (lemme catch my breath), okay: As a result of my reputation of having God's ear, a lotta mothahfuckahs pray to me — I have three full-time assistants just to sift through it all. Long story short, I was axed to look into the case of Judas Iscariot by this Irish Gypsy lawyer bitch in Purgatory named Cunningham. She wanted me to do some naggin' to God on Judas' behalf, and, quite frankly, I was impressed by

her nagging abilities — cuz that bitch naged my ass day and night for forty days ... But I don't nag for juss any anybody, and I definitely don't nag for no mothahfuckah I don't know, so, I went down to check out Judas for my own self — (And now she is with Judas. To audience.) He looked fuckin' retarded, he wouldn't talk or nuthin'. He didn't seem to hear me, and I'm nor someone who has a problem expressing myself. I figured he was fakin', so I did this: (To Judas.) Yo, Judas! ... Yo, you deaf, mothahfuckah? ... Judas, yo! ... (To audience) I smacked the bitch around a little. (Monica slaps, kicks, shoves.) Yo Helen Keller! Yo, wake up! ... Don't front — I know you could hear me ... (To audience.) Then I started snappin' on his ass: (To Judas.) Yo, Judas, you got charge for thirty pieces of Silver, mothahfuckah?! ... Yo, Judas, how much you pay for that haircut? — thirty pieces of silver? Yo Judas, why you so "hung" up? C'mon, let's "hang" out. C'mon, bitch, go out on a "limb!" You want a "olive"? C'mon mothahfuckah, have a "olive." Wanna go to the "Olive Garden" restaurant? Day gor good "olive oil" there ... Ah-aight, fine, come on, Judas, whaddya say you an' me go down to the bar and — berryay some mothahfuckahs! Whaddya say?! I know you like betraying! What's up, you ain't in the mood to betray today?! Ah-aight, mothahfuckah, we can just "hang?" Get it? Hang?! Get it?! Do you get it? ... Wassamatter?! Hungry?! How bout some supper? You want some supper, mothahfuckah?! C'mon, one last supper, whaddya say?! (To audience.) I couldn't break him. So I sat down next to him. (She sits.) I sat with Judas Iscarior for three days. (To audience.) Then, on the night of the third day, sumpthin' happened. While I was restrin' my vocal chords, I saw sumptin' unexpected. I saw a single tear fall out Judas' eye. Just one. When the tear hit the ground, I saw it was red like a ruby. I looked into his eyes, like this: (Monica looks into Judas' eyes.) He couldn't look at me. Or he looked through me. I couldn't tell. His eyes was empty. He barely breathed. He was like a catatonic statue of a former human being. And I decreed sadness in him. Paralyzing, immobilizing, overwhelming sadness. His sadness ran through him like a river that had frozen up and died and no one lived there no more. After a while, I didn't know what else to do, so I thought I'd just hold him in my arms for like a minute, warm him up before I left. (Monica cradles Judas in her arms. Beat.) I held him in my arms for four days. On the third day, I remembered how Jesus had said that God has the biggest love for the least of his creatures — and Judas was the least-est creature I had ever seen. On the

fourth day, Judas dropped another single tear. It was clear-colored this time and it evaporated into the earth on impact. He trembled briefly, then froze up again ... I had seen enough. I took off my outer garments and left them for him so he could smell something human. I collected my tears in a bucket and poured it on his face so he could taste the salt. Then I went back home and got on the horn to God. I dialed direct, yo. Some people call it being a nag, I call it doing my job. I got a calling, y'all — you should try giving me a shout if ya ever need it, cuz my name is Saint Monica, I'm the mother of Saint Augustine, one of the Fathers of the Church, and ya know what? My ass gets results. (A gravel bangs.)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next case!

BAILIFF. "God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus

Judas Iscarior!"

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Bailiff!!!

BAILIFF. She got a writ signed by God, sir.

SAINT MONICA. Signed, sealed, delivered, mothahfuckah! Peace!

CUNNINGHAM. Here is the writ, your Honor — note the signature at the bottom. (*Saint Monica vanishes.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Bailiff! Bailiff! Where's El-Fajita? (*El-Fajoumy rises with panache.*)

EL-FAYOUMY. Present and accounted for and dripping with anticipation to defend with marvelous cunning and great relish the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth and your great sir-ness against the Satan-spawned traitor Judas Iscariot and his beguiling but ourlandishly misguided counsel, most eminently great and rakishly handsome great sir!!! (Beat.)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (Re: the writ.) Cunningham, I do not like it when lawyers go over my head. Cunningham. You gave me no choice.

EL-FAYOUMY. Objection, your Honor!!! As human beings, we always have choice! Motion to strike!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Mr. El-Fajita, you are aware that the trial hasn't actually begun yet, right?

EL-FAYOUMY. Uh ... Yes ... Right. Of course. I was merely, uh ... Yes sir!... (Sheepishly sits.)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. "Fabiana" "Aziza" "Cunningham," that right?

CUNNINGHAM. It is. JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. So where's the red hair and freckles,

Cunningham?
 CUNNINGHAM. My mother was a Romanian Gypsy who settled in Vinegar Hill in Harlem in the 1960s.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. And your father?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Gor more than his palm read, did he? Alright then, Cunningham, I think it only fair at this juncture to tell you some things about myself, things that may, perhaps, inspire you to take your little mission elsewhere. For example, I strongly dislike tapioca pudding —

EL-FAYOUMY. (Rising.) Tapioca, the worst, I spit on it!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Siddown! (*To Cunningham*) But even more than Tapioca, Cunningham, I dislike the following: defense attorneys as a rule, half-breeds in general, and Judas Iscariot as anything other than a cautionary tale. Now that a problem for you?

CUNNINGHAM. No.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. You ever met God, Cunningham?

CUNNINGHAM. I don't know that I believe in God.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. You've just handed me a writ signed by him, and, yet, you don't know if you believe?

CUNNINGHAM. Correct.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Well, what if God appeared to you, Cunningham? Just one day, boom! God: white beard, flowing robe, the whole rack a lamb.

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. What if you were to go home tonight, Cunningham, and Jesus Christ himself were to greet you at your door with a dozen Krispy Kremes and a quart of cold milk and say, "Cunningham, Fabiana. It's me. I really am that thing that you've always feared more than doubted" — what would you do?

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. And what if you let him in, Cunningham, and you sat down with The Man for just, say, three minutes? And you could touch him and inspect him and interrogate him all you want and have him do miracles and tell you the exact story of your life, and you ended up convinced — convinced, Cunningham — wiping away tears of joy and relief on your living room couch. If he proved it to you, Cunningham, would you believe then?

CUNNINGHAM. If he proved it, I suppose I would have to.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. After only three minutes?

CUNNINGHAM. But that would never happen —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham, you're the cynical, faithless spawn of a crackpot gypsy and a defrocked mick — yes, you just told me Jesus would have you on your knees in three minutes. CUNNINGHAM. So?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. So consider this: your friend Judas? He had Jesus for three years. Think about that, Cunningham. Three years in the foxhole with the best friend ya ever had, then he shot him in the back for a pack of Kools. Think what that says about the essential character of the man. Now go home and stir *that* into your wee Bypsy reapt! *Petition's invalid, motion denied! Next case!*

EL-FAYOUMY. Pure genius! I am erect!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, this petition is signed by *God!*
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Yeah, but it ain't signed by your client, now is it?

CUNNINGHAM. My client is catatonic, he's incapable of signing.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. If he's catatonic, then how do you know he wants an appeal in the first place?

CUNNINGHAM. Who wouldn't want to appeal eternal damnation?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Someone who was aware of his own self-inflicted erosion of the capacity to be filled by grace ... Someone too prideful to ask for forgiveness even in the face of the fiery furnace. Or maybe, he don't bother askin', cuz he knows he don't deserve it!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honos, the only person who *needs* forgiveness is the one who doesn't deserve it.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Then let him ask!

CUNNINGHAM. I'm asking for him!
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. *Out of my courtroom, sister, and may have God have mercy on your blasted arrogant soul!* Now get thee back uprown, woman. Stop your rabble-rousing, and get humble — cuz you aint gonna get to heaven by trying to dismantle the natural order of things that the good Lord has so thoughtfully put together!!!

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, are you a citizen of heaven?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Bailiff! Remove this woman!

CUNNINGHAM. You live here with us — you know no more about God's law than anyone else in this court!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. My papers are pending — I'll be up there any day now,
 CUNNINGHAM. Your papers have been pending since 1864,

your Honor, that's 140 years —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. — If there's an insinuation at the end of that statement, Cunningham, I suggest you don't make it!

CUNNINGHAM. Not an insinuation, your Honor, but a question: If the "truth" really does set us free, then, what is it, your Honor, that is progressively precluding your capacity to respond to the call of that truth? Because 140 years suggests to me that you are moving nor closer, but farther and farther away from it every day!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. What the hell does "Judas Iscariot" have to do with my truth, Cunningham? I didn't hang myself from some olive branch!

CUNNINGHAM. Nor from an olive branch, but on a battlefield in northern Georgia in 1864. Allatoona. And the tree — oak, I believe. Your Honor, I have no wonder what your honest answer will be, when you are someday asked how different you are now from that day when you died? (*An uncomfortable pause.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Tomorrow morning, Nine A.M. That work for you?

CUNNINGHAM. It does.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (*To bailiff.*) Put in the docket.

BAILIFF. Docket?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Just write it down!

BAILIFF. Um ... (*The bailiff takes out a pen and scribbles info on his hand.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Anything else, Fabiana Aziza Cunningham?

CUNNINGHAM. No, your Honor.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next fuckin' case!!!

EL-FAYOUMY. Fear not, your Grace, I shall slay this fallen woman as the crocodile slays the one-legged newt!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. NEXT CASE NEXT CASE NEXT CASE NEXT CASE!!! (*The gavel bangs. Gloria and Loretta, wearing a hospital gown, appear.*)

GLORIA. Very little is actually known about Judas Iscariot — Oh! this is my fellow jury member Loretta. On earth, she's currently on Life Support.

LORETTA. Hi! Hello!

GLORIA. Have they figured out whether you comin' or goin' yet?

LORETTA. Not really. "Any day now" they say. (*Gloria takes a peek around.*)

GLORIA. (*Conspiratorially.*) Say, Loretta — you smoke cigarettes?

LORETTA. Well, not unconscious on a respirator.

GLORIA. Yeah but — you got one for me?

LORETTA. Maybe in my clutch. Oh. Here. (*Loretta produces a cigarette.*)

GLORIA. Oh snap — Newports?! Oh, you my girl now! You got a light?

LORETTA. (*Producing a lighter.*) It's a NASCAR lighter.

GLORIA. (*Disinterested.*) Mmm-mm-hmmm. (*She lights her cigarette, inhales. To audience.*) So anyways — about judas, not a lot is known except that he was chosen to be an apostle, he betrayed Jesus, and then he hung himself. Not a lot to go on — especially when we're meant to rely on facts.

LORETTA. You know, I had an uncle — can I say this?

GLORIA. Go ahead. (*Loretta addresses the audience.*)

LORETTA. When I was a little girl, my drunk Uncle Pino, he used to like to go around saying —

UNCLE PINO. "I believe, because it is absurd! It is certain because it is impossible!"

GLORIA. What did he mean by that?

LORETTA. No clue ... But I think — (*Butch Honeywell enters.*)

BUTCH HONEYWELL. Ladies, we're back.

GLORIA. (*To audience.*) Oh wait — hold up! (*Gloria snaps her fingers dramatically and both Butch and Loretta freeze in time.*) Now that's Butch Honeywell; and unlike Loretta, he definitely dead. And also unlike Loretta, he got no real interest in finding that out. (*Gloria snaps her fingers again and Butch and Loretta "un-freeze."*) So Butch, did we miss anything in there?

BUTCH HONEYWELL. Oh, just some crap about the essential paradox of man: How we refuse to juxtapose the absolute to the relative, and some other some-such about paradox as an ontological definition which expresses the relation between an existing cognitive spirit and eternal truth — you know, bullshit. Listen, they passed out the lunch menus — I ordered you guys the Combo club with fritters.

LORETTA. Fritters: awesome! Thanks, Burch.

BUTCH HONEYWELL. Right this way, ladies. (*The gavel bangs.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next witness!

EL-FAYOUMY. Great magnificent sir! The prosecution now calls Henrietta Iscariot, mother to Judas Iscariot to the stand!

BAILIFF. State your name, ma'am.

HENRIETTA ISCARJOT. Henrietta Iscariot.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes ... Good day, Ms. Iscariot.
 HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Good day.
 EL-FAYOUMY. Yes ... Well ... I can't help but notice, Ms. Iscariot, that you are a very well-built woman — would it be fair to say "your cup runneth over?"

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Um, all the Iscariots are buxom, if that's what you mean?
 EL-FAYOUMY. *My meaning exactly!!!* Now then: can you recall if Judas Iscariot as an infant was prone to steal more than his fair share of milk from your deliciously well-apportioned bosom?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. I can't recall that. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. Very well, but can you recall ... *this!!!* I take you back to the year eight. You were a single parent raising many children, Judas being your eldest, and the man of the family. You sent him out fishing to get food for you and his poor starving sisters. What happened next?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. (*To Judge Littlefield*) Do I have to answer?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Just tell the truth, ma'am.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Well, Judas didn't come home 'til very late. I waited by the fire. I was worried. He was only eight. I was concerned that maybe the Romans had detained him for shoplifting again —

EL-FAYOUMY. A shoplifter! So please the court!
 HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. But then he came home. (*Judas crosses on floor. He is eight.*)

JUDAS. Hi Mommy.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Judas! I was so worried.

JUDAS. Look what I got, Mommy? A spinning top!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Judas, did you catch any fish? Your sisters are weeping with hunger —

EL-FAYOUMY. Weeping, your great sir! Weeping and wailing!

JUDAS. I caught five fish, Mommy!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. But where are they?

JUDAS. I sold them in the market and bought this spinning top.

Look how it spins, mommy!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Judas Iscariot, I am ashamed of you!

JUDAS. But Mommy —

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. — *Selfish boy, you will come to no good!!!*

EL-FAYOUMY. *"Selfish boy, you will come to no good," was that your statement at that time?*
 HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. He was only eight!
 EL-FAYOUMY. Eight — and too late!! Nothing further, greater sir!
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cross?

EL-FAYOUMY. No, thank you.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I wasn't asking you.

CUNNINGHAM. Ms. Iscariot, what happened the next day?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. Well, he ran away from home that night, and I searched for him all day. Late in the afternoon, I observed the following — (*Matthias of Galilee, a sad-looking boy crosses to Judas, who is spinning his top, alone.*)

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Hi.

JUDAS. Hi.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Hi.

JUDAS. ... My name's Judas. What's yours?

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Matthias of Galilee. (*Matthias of Galilee sits.*)

JUDAS. Hey, I got an idea: Why don't you go home and get your spinning top; and then, when you get back with your spinning top, we can play battle of the spinning tops!

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. I don't got a spinning top.

JUDAS. Oh.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. I wish I had a spinning top; all my friends got one except me.

JUDAS. Yeah, that's rough. I used to nor have one too.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. All the kids, they call me "sissypants" cuz I don't got no spinning top.

JUDAS. You should ask your mommy to buy you one.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. I don't got a mommy.

JUDAS. Ask your daddy then.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. I got a daddy, but he's very stern. He don't believe in spinning tops, so I can't never get one.

JUDAS. Wow.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. You prolly think I'm a sissypants too.

JUDAS. No. Hey man — don't cry.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. It's just very hard to ger through life

without a spinning top, you know? (*Beat.*)

JUDAS. You ... You wanna try mine?

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. For real?

JUDAS. Here. (*Matthias spins the spinning top, his mood immediately improves.*)

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Wow! Nobody in Galilee's got a spin-

ring top like this — this is a wicked cool spinning top, Judas.
JUDAS. I picked it out myself.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Boy oh boy, your father must really love you to buy you such a most-definitely dope spinning top as this!
JUDAS. My father's dead.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. What!!!!???

JUDAS. The Romans kill him.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. (In one breath.) Yeah? The Romans, they took all our goats last month and now we don't have no money for nothing, even food, and so my father makes me go to the butcher and ask for bones for my dog but I don't have a dog and the butcher knows I don't have a dog, but he gives me the bones cuz he takes pity on me and then I give them to my father and he makes soup for us with the bones and we eat it and it tastes really bad and my grandmoms says my father's pride is wounded cuz he can't earn no money cuz the Romans took our goats and that's why everything's messed up and I can't have no spinning top or nothing. Uh-oh!

JUDAS. What?

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. I berrah go home now. I have to be home before six. My father's very stern.

JUDAS. Oh. Okay.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Thank you for letting me play with your spinning top, Judas. Maybe someday my daddy'll get some more goats and then I'll get a spinning top, and then I'll come back and play spinning tops with you, and we can play spinning tops and stuff, cuz that was fun.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. The sad boy started to leave, then —
JUDAS. Wait ... here.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. What?

JUDAS. You can have it.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. I can have your spinning top!?

JUDAS. Yeah.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. For real?

JUDAS. Yeah.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE. Wow-ee!!! Dag! Thank you, Judas. (Mathias kisses Judas on the cheek, exits.)
HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. When people ask me who my son was, I tell them that story.
CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Ms. Iscariot. The witness is excused.

EL-FAYOUMY. Not so fast! Ms. Iscariot, your son was picked up by the Roman Authorities the very next day, on a charge of stealing a blind man's staff, correct? A blind man's staff that he then pawned to Omar the Baker to purchase, it says here: "cotton candy and a royal blue spinning top," correct? Correct? ... Is that correct, Ms. Iscario?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. I don't know, it was so long ago —

EL-FAYOUMY. Speak into the microphone!!!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT. There is no microphone.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. This is true ... Uh, Your Honor, we have reason to believe that the staff-deprived blind man in question was later run over by a rabid Judean camel. Here is the death certificate. No further questions. (Gavel bangs.)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next witness!

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes! wise sir! Prosecution calls the incomparable Mother Teresa to the stand! (Mother Teresa bobbles up to the stand by cane. She's old, but tough. She wears her signature sari, and a cross around her neck. She can't hear hardly at all ...)

BAILIFF. Name...

MOTHER TERESA. Did you say something?

BAILIFF. Name?

MOTHER TERESA. What?

BAILIFF. Your name, please, ma'am?

MOTHER TERESA. Oh, Jess. (She checks her watch.) 10:45. Okay?

BAILIFF. Uh ... (El-Fayoumy takes charge.)

EL-FAYOUMY. Mother Teresa: Hello. Over here!

MOTHER TERESA. Who's dat?

EL-FAYOUMY. Hello. It is I, Mother. Remember me?

MOTHER TERESA. Oh, jess. Handsome boy! Hello.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Hello. How are you?

MOTHER TERESA. Speaker louder, boy,

EL-FAYOUMY. (Much louder.) I said: "How are you?"

MOTHER TERESA. What?

EL-FAYOUMY. (Very very loud.) I SAID, "HOW ... ARE ...

YOU?"

CUNNINGHAM. Uh, Judge, Bailiff — I believe we do have a hearing device for Mother Teresa?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (To Bailiff.) Get the device.

BAILIFF. I believe you have the device, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. What? Here. (The bailiff takes a large set of headphones, hands them to Mother Teresa.)

BAILIFF. Ma'am, put these on, ma'am?
 MOTHER TERESA. What? (*The bailiff puts the earphones on Mother Teresa's head.*) Oh. Thank you, giant man.
 EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Hello Mother! Yes. Can you hear me now?
 MOTHER TERESA. Yes. (*El-Fayoumy speaks much softer.*)
 EL-FAYOUMY. (*Much softer.*) How about now?
 MOTHER TERESA. Yes. (*El-Fayoumy now simply mimes speaking.*)

EL-FAYOUMY. How about that?
 MOTHER TERESA. ... You are tricking me, no?
 EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Yes. I was tricking.
 MOTHER TERESA. (*Playfully.*) Bad boy.
 EL-FAYOUMY. (*Playing back.*) Very bad. A scandal. Yes. I know. (*El-Fayoumy and Mother Teresa titter.*)
 CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, if prosecution is through flirting with the beatified iconic virgin, we could, perhaps, begin?
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. El-Fayoumy, contact has been established — let's get on with it now, shall we?
 EL-FAYOUMY. Without further hesitation, your Grace. Forgive the delay. I was simply enamored to be in her beatific presence, your eminence. I love Mother Teresa, great one, in Christian Egypt, she is a great star — as a young boy, I used to don a towel and my mother's nightgown and stalk the back streets of Cairo looking for dying things to comfort and salve. Yes. (*El-Fayoumy has become a little emotional. To Mother Teresa.*) Mother! I love you really. You are the oasis! You are the light!
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Do we need to take a moment here, Counselor?
 EL-FAYOUMY. (*Dabbing his eyes.*) Yes. Yes, your Honor. Perhaps we do.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Five-minute recess! Adjourned. (*Gravel bangs. Lights crossfade to Saint Peter and Saint Matthew sitting in a quiet place up above.*)

Messiah instead a focusing on the task at hand — and I'd always be like, "Look fellas, unless your messiah gonna come down right now and help us catch some fish, then, y'all need to shur the heck up and pur your undivided focus on these damn *ness*." Then, one day, Drew didn't turn up for work, then he come runnin' up to me at the shore at the end of the day when I'm bringin' the boat back in talkin' 'bout, "This is Jesus, bro — he's the Messiah. I ain't fishin' no more. I'm just gonna follow him" ... And this Jesus, who resembled a messiah about as much as I resemble a ballerina in a tu-tu, strides on up to me and says, "Catch any fish today?" And I says, "No I did not catch any fish today," and he says, "Take the boat back out to the Sea and you gonna catch some fish." So, I took Jesus our with me — intendin' to throw his ass overboard — but then he says: "Cast your nets wide and deep," so I did, and then ... well ... All I can say is I'm a damn professional commercial fisherman. No one knew the Sea and its tides better than me. There weren't no fish out there ... but ... that's because it turned out they was all in my net. And then Jesus said; "Follow me and I will make you a fisher of men." And what I didn't know then was that I would never see the sea again.

SAINT MATTHEW. My name is Matthew. I was a Jewish tax collector for the Empire. My job was to take the food out of your mouth and see it shipped off to Rome. Roman tax was exorbitant and non-negotiable. If you had six geese, I took three. If you had a flock of sheep, I took fifty percent. If you had only one sheep, I cut that sheep in half. If you had no sheep, I took a child — your child — and had him or her sold into slavery to settle your debt to the Emperor. This is nor a made-up story. This is history. This is fact. We were a conquered nation and I was a traitor to my people. I was a Jew stealing from Jews. According to our laws, I was a sinner and a traitor. I was unclean — unfit to be gazed upon. That's who I was.

SAINT PETER. I hated your ass to look at it.

SAINT MATTHEW. And I looked at you, Peter, as a dumb, ignorant fisherman.

SAINT PETER. And I looked at you Matthew, as something I can't say in mixed company.

SAINT MATTHEW. I was a scumbag.

SAINT PETER. True dat.

SAINT MATTHEW. I was a scumbag, and it was against the law to look me in the eye. Jesus, he looked me in my eye. That's all he did. He looked me in my eye and he said, "Follow me." And before

I knew it, I had. And before we broke bread that night, I was clean again... (Beat.) I was *clean*. (*Lights fade as the gravel bangs.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. El-Fayoumy, are we ready to proceed?

(*El-Fayoumy rises.*)

EL-FAYOUMY. Absolutely! ... Forgive me the delay ... Mother Teresa — I will not take much of your time here, and, certainly, you are in no need of introduction.

MOTHER TERESA. I don't mind.

EL-FAYOUMY. Very well, then ... Mother Teresa, you are a soon-to-be-canonical saint and a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace. You are from Albania, which tells me you know how to handle a firearm, but yet, from the age of twelve, you desired to serve God, at eighteen you entered the convent, and at twenty-one, you left for the slums of Calcutta, and soon after began ministering to the sick and dying — which you did with mercy, love, grace and generosity for the rest of your life until the day you died. Correct?

MOTHER TERESA. Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Absolutely yes, Mother. Now then Mother, I call you to the stand today for a special purpose.

MOTHER TERESA. And what is dat?

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. I am coming to it ... Mother, your life and subsequent canonization suggests to me that you know a thing or two about God and the life of the spirit — correct?

MOTHER TERESA. I know what I know. What do you want to know?

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Mother, is there a hell?

MOTHER TERESA. I hope not, but I think so.

EL-FAYOUMY. Jesus Iscariot — he is in hell — yes?

MOTHER TERESA. Well, we can't never know for sure, but, it doan look good.

EL-FAYOUMY. Mother, shouldn't we feel sorry for someone in hell?

MOTHER TERESA. Very sorry. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Does God feel sorry for people in hell?

MOTHER TERESA. More sorry than us. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. But, if God feels *so* sorry, why not bring the "damned" upstairs? "Three hots and a cot," yes? Surely God has that power?

MOTHER TERESA. Boy, God can lead us anywhere, but sometimes, the people, they doan wanna go. If the people doan wanna go, then, whaddya gonna do?

EL-FAYOUMY. But surely, these people do not prefer to go to hell? MOTHER TERESA. You'd be surprised. Do you know what despair is, boy?

EL-FAYOUMY. Mother, illuminate me.

MOTHER TERESA. I will tell you what Thomas Merton — who was a very handsome boy like you — I will tell you what that boy had to say about despair. You may not know this, but I, at one time in my life, suffered a great spiritual darkness —

EL-FAYOUMY. — Oh no, nor you —

MOTHER TERESA. Quiet now, boy. Jess, for many, many years, I experienced a terrible pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, and of God not really existing. One day, I confided my feelings to a friend: an Irish nun, one of the Sisters of Loretto from Dublin, Ireland. My friend, Sister Glenna, she quoted to me Thomas Merton on the subject of despair. She said —

SISTER GLENNNA. "Despair ... is the ultimate development of a pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves."

MOTHER TERESA. Do you understand what I'm saying to you? EL-FAYOUMY. Can you repeat it?

MOTHER TERESA. Jess, sure. SISTER GLENNNA. "Despair is the ultimate development of a pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves."

EL-FAYOUMY. Ah, yes. I think I see. MOTHER TERESA. Judas, he succumb to despair. The music of God's love and grace kept playing, but he, he made himself hard of hearing —like me, no? I need this earphone device to hear you, yes? Without them, I can no hear nothing. Judas, he threw his earphones away — and that is very sad, but, that is what he chose and that is what happened.

EL-FAYOUMY. But Mother, couldn't God have just obtained a megaphone and simply shouted instructions into Judas' ear? MOTHER TERESA. Boy, one must participate in one's own salvation. In order to hear, one must be willing to listen. When you turn off God, you are saying, "I know better than you." No good, boy. No good.

EL-FAYOUMY. No good indeed. Mother, you are a ravishing delight and I thank you for your astute and expert testimony!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cross?

CUNNINGHAM. Mother Teresa, upon receiving your Nobel Prize, did you say to the world, quote: "The biggest obstacle to global peace in the world today is abortion"?

MOTHER TERESA. Jess. I said that.

CUNNINGHAM. Do you actually believe that?

MOTHER TERESA. Jess. I do.

CUNNINGHAM. You accepted large cash donations from the Duvalier family in Haiti, correct?

MOTHER TERESA. Yes.

CUNNINGHAM. Duvalier being a dictator who murdered and stole from his people?

MOTHER TERESA. He gave. I took.

CUNNINGHAM. Blood money?

MOTHER TERESA. No. Cashier's check.

CUNNINGHAM. You also took money from Charles Keating, the savings-and-loan scam artist who robbed American citizens of billions of dollars?

MOTHER TERESA. For the poor, I took it. You got five dollars? I take from you too. CUNNINGHAM. You opposed the Vatican II reforms, which among other things, called for a long-overdue official condemnation of anti-Semitism as it relates to the death of Christ. Did you oppose Vatican II, Mother Teresa?

MOTHER TERESA. Yes.

CUNNINGHAM. You blamed the wars of the world on abortion, took blood money from murderers and thieves, and opposed taking a stance against anti-Semitism. I'm having trouble understanding why we're supposed to consider you an expert on anything having to do with the spirit.

MOTHER TERESA. Oh, jess?

CUNNINGHAM. Yes.

MOTHER TERESA. Than maybe you better figure it out. CUNNINGHAM. I had two abortions, Mother Teresa, what do you think about that?

MOTHER TERESA. I will pray for you and your children.

CUNNINGHAM. I don't have any children.

MOTHER TERESA. Not anymore, and that's terrible.

CUNNINGHAM. Mother Teresa, if abortion is so terrible, then how come I'm not in hell?

MOTHER TERESA. I don't know. Did anybody tell you you weren't?

CUNNINGHAM. Must be nice to have all the answers.

MOTHER TERESA. Must be hard to have only questions.

CUNNINGHAM. I can live with my questions, Mother Teresa. But if you can live with those answers, then, with all due respect, I'd say your place is nor in heaven with the saints, but with the rest of the dinosaurs living in the Stone Age. Nothing further. (*El-Fayoumy rises emphatically*)

EL-FAYOUMY. Mother Teresa — I wonder if you join me in wondering just (*Turning to Cunningham. who the hell Defense Counsel thinks she's speaking like that??*)

MOTHER TERESA. It's OK, boy. Everybody wanna say something —

EL-FAYOUMY. — Yes —

MOTHER TERESA. — Nobody wanna listen nothing.

EL-FAYOUMY. This is correct, Mother. And on that well struck note, Mother, let us now go back and address some of the outlandish —

MOTHER TERESA. I go now.

EL-FAYOUMY. But I'm not finished.

MOTHER TERESA. I go now.

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh ... As you wish, Mother. (*To jury*) And I think we should all emblazon in our memories — (*Mother Teresa takes off her earphones.*)

MOTHER TERESA. Boy.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes, Mother?

MOTHER TERESA. Maybe, boy, you give this earphone device to Girl. Like this, maybe girl gonna hear something make her head don't hurt no more.

CUNNINGHAM. There's nothing wrong with my head!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham, stand down! MOTHER TERESA. Nice boy ... Handsome boy ... (*And time stands still as we see Mother Teresa hobble off. Gavel bangs.*)

CUNNINGHAM. Defense calls Simon the Zealot to the stand. JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Name.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Simon the Zealot.

CUNNINGHAM. You were one of the twelve apostles, Simon — correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

CUNNINGHAM. And you were a zealot.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

CUNNINGHAM. Was Judas Iscariot a zealot?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Well, he didn't go to the meetings or nuthin, but, yeah, he was pretty much a zealot if you ax me.

CUNNINGHAM. Zealots being Jews seeking an end to the violent oppression of the Roman occupation, correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Accually, not exactly, no.

CUNNINGHAM. Are you saying the zealots were *in favor* of the occupation?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Nah. Nor at all. We hated the Romans — absolutely we wanted their pagan asses to hit the curb running and bloody, but, we was also opposed to any gentiles in Palestine — Greek, Roman, whoever. What us zealots was really about was promoting a strict adherence to the Mosaic Law.

CUNNINGHAM. Mosaic Law being?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. The Law of Moses — the Torah. That was the whole bag right there, miss. Get rid of the bad seeds and unite the people under the holy law of God. Basically, we were the street version of Caiaphas the Elder except we had knives and shit and we thought Caiaphas was soft.

CUNNINGHAM. Soft how?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. With the Romans. He was a bit of a politician, ya know?

CUNNINGHAM. And what was life like under Roman rule?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Where you from, miss?

CUNNINGHAM. New York.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Okay. Imagine New York was taken over by, like, violent devil-worshipping cannibals who spit on your laws, stole all your money, took your women and children as slaves, and pur giant swastikas on all your bridges, tunnels, libraries, and civic institutions — and anybody that complained about it got nailed naked to a piece of wood in Times Square — left to be eaten by rats, and shit on by pigeons until the weight of their body asphyxiated them to death. That's what it was like.

CUNNINGHAM. And you thought Jesus was going to change that, didn't you?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. We all did.

CUNNINGHAM. Change it how?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Throw them out. That's what the Messiah was supposed to do.

CUNNINGHAM. But he didn't do that, did he?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Nah.

CUNNINGHAM. And yet he was capable of it, wasn't he? You saw him perform miracles, raise people from the dead.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. It was a bit of a conundrum, yeah. CUNNINGHAM. Were you at the disturbance at the Temple?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

CUNNINGHAM. What did you think abour that?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Ya kidding? I loved it. Judas too. We all did. We thought it was on, ya know?

CUNNINGHAM. "On" meaning?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. The beginning of the revolution.

CUNNINGHAM. But it wasn't, was it?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Nah.

CUNNINGHAM. What happened after the riot at the Temple?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Jesus had us all retreat to this house, then, he was like; "I'm going to die soon, so let's just chill."

CUNNINGHAM. Must have been very disappointing.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. It was confusing — I mean, whacked out shit, man. One minure Jesus is beating infidels down — and I'm talking fists and whips — Jesus was whipping ass, knockin' our teeth, screaming he's gonna tear down the temple, the next minute, he's all passive. And we were all like, "We invested three years in this guy, and now he's gonna just lay down?" It didn't seem to make no sense.

CUNNINGHAM. Simon: Why do you think Judas Iscariot turned Jesus in to the authorities?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Personally, I think Judas was trying to throw Jesus into the deep end of the pool — make him swim. CUNNINGHAM. Judas was testin Jesus?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Not testin, cuz we all knew Jesus had mad skills to pass the test.

CUNNINGHAM. What then?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Listen, I knew Judas pretty good. We was pretty tight on account of, ya know, our politics and whatnot. What I believe is this: Judas knew that if the Romans grabbed up Jesus, that Jesus would have to act.

CUNNINGHAM. Meaning?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Meaning *act*. Get it on and start kicking ass like He was supposed to. Emancipation was our birthright. That's what the Messiah was there for. I think, personally, that Judas did what he did to help Jesus realize his destiny and fulfill his mission.

CUNNINGHAM. Judas tried to help Jesus?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. I believe so. Yes.

CUNNINGHAM. Thank you. (*El-Fayoumy rises,*)

EL-FAYOUMY. So ... Judas was a "helper," eh?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. Just ... there to lend zee helping hand, yes?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes, Yes, I think you are correct, a zealous one! Because, for me, I know that if my best friend were to sell me out and betray me for a roll of quarters, causing me to be beaten, whipped, gouged, and mangled, and then strung up and left to be baked by the hot Judæan sun 'till I resembled a shriveled-up, bearded *frankfurter* — Why yes! I'm sure my first thought as I gasped for air and bled to death would be, "Really, that Judas — what a *helpful* guy! — oh yes, I must remember to send him zee thank-you note!" ... Simon the Zealot, let's talk turkey: Judas was your friend, yes?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. You thought the same way, yes?
SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.
EL-FAYOUMY. Shared the same opinions.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. Had the same beliefs.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. Wanted the same things.
SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yes.
EL-FAYOUMY. Wanted them desperately.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. Then why, zealot, did you not do like Judas did? If you believed what you believed and thought what you thought, why, zealot, did you not join Judas or turn Jesus in on your own? Can you explain me this?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. ... I don't know.

EL-FAYOUMY. (*Re: Simon.*) Protecting a friend — that is admirable indeed. Zealot, Jesus never said his mission as Messiah on earth was to overthrow the Romans, did he?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Not exactly, no.

EL-FAYOUMY. You wanted it to be the mission, you even thought it was the mission, but, it wasn't really the mission, was it? SIMON THE ZEALOT. I guess not.
EL-FAYOUMY. How is it, zealous one, that *you* came to understand that violence wasn't part of Jesus' mission, But *Judas* never did?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. ... I couldn't say.

EL-FAYOUMY. Answer me this: What was your inner life like before you met Jesus of Nazareth? I don't think I need to advise you to be honest here, do I?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Nah. I was consumed with anger. Jesus — he saved my life.

EL-FAYOUMY. Man of *zeal*: final question: Do you believe, as the Bible says, that God made man in his own image?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. I do.

EL-FAYOUMY. Of course you do, and there, zealous friend, lies the answer to one of my previous questions. The difference, I posit, between you and Judas Iscariot, is that you *accepted* that you were created in God's image, whereas Judas Iscariot — he sought to create God into *his own image* — God as earthly avenger, which was not God's way. And even though you were scared, zealot, even though you were confused and angry, and hurt, still, you chose to obey God, didn't you?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. I guess I got lucky.

EL-FAYOUMY. Luck indeed! Simon the Zealot: There is something beautiful about you — and that — is your modesty. You are a God-fearing man. Go now. Be free. (*Fabiana rises,*) CUNNINGHAM. Jesus never proclaimed himself to be God, Simon — correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Nah. He never did.

CUNNINGHAM. What did Jesus say to Judas at the last supper?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. He said, "Do what you gotta do"

CUNNINGHAM. Sounds like Jesus approved.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Maybe.

CUNNINGHAM. But if you were Judas, Simon, and "doing what you had to do" ended up getting you thrown into despair and hanging from a tree and then sent to hell to live in misery and infamy in perpetuity — if you were Judas — wouldn't you have kinda wished that Jesus had maybe said something else instead?

SIMON THE ZEALOT. Yes, Counselor. I very much would have.

CUNNINGHAM. Would it kind of make you feel like you got fucked?

EL-FAYOUMY. Objection: language! "A foul mouth is a dirty bird!" CUNNINGHAM. I withdraw the question.

SIMON THE ZEALOT. ... I woulda felt like you said, though.

CUNNINGHAM. Thank you, Simon. Nothing further.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next witness!

EL-FAYOUMY. Most reverent señor — with your magisterial permission — Prosecution now conjures Satan, Prince of Darkness, to the stand! (*Satan enters, waves amiably to the jury*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Name!

SATAN. (*To Fabiana*) Fabiana Aziza Cunningham, right?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Lou.

SATAN. I been keeping the light on for ya, Cunningham.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. C'mon now, Lou — why don't you take your seat and we can get started here?

SATAN. You never change, Frank, do you?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I suppose I don't.

SATAN. I like that about you. Now say, how's Wilhemina doing? And the girls?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I wouldn't know. Now, park your caboose in that chassy if you would, please?

SATAN. I'm sorry. Of course. (*To El-Fayoumy*) Fire away. (*To Judge*) My apologies, Frank. (*Bailiff enters*,)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Bailiff.

BAILIFF. I was helping the elderly, sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Let's just proceed. El-Fayoumy — proceed!

EL-FAYOUMY. Ah. Yes. Uh ... Yes ... Uh ... How are you today, Satan?

SATAN. Well ... Long night, but uh, no regrets.

EL-FAYOUMY. Up late partying with the decadent and debauched?

SATAN. Oh, God, does it show?

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh — No no, not at all.

SATAN. I'll tell ya — I could barely make it through my double session pilates this morning — if it weren't for the good genes I'd be a raisin with tis and a perm.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Well you look very good. Sincerely. Really, Satan, you have an excellent physique.

SATAN. Oh — Thank you. So do you.

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh. Thank you too. Yes, I make exercises ... Anyway, so ... No horns and tail today, Prince of Evil?

SATAN. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. At the dry cleaners, I suppose.

SATAN. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes ... I must say, Claimer of the Damned, your candor is quite refreshing.

SATAN. As is yours.

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh ... Thank you ... Yes ... Oh! Your jacket,

Satan, really, it is smart.

SATAN. You like it?

EL-FAYOUMY. Beautiful, really. Armani?

SATAN. Gucci.

EL-FAYOUMY. "Gucci." Yes. Elegant. Very. Yes ... So ... and your trousers, they are Gucci too?

SATAN. Yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. They have a lovely sheen ... Anyway. Let's begin then, shall we?

SATAN. I am at your service.

EL-FAYOUMY. I appreciate that.

SATAN. And I appreciate your appreciation.

EL-FAYOUMY. Excellent ... So ... Dark One, tell me: Did you ever have any conversations with Judas Iscariot prior to his selling-out of Jesus Christ?

SATAN. No, I did not.

EL-FAYOUMY. Sure about that?

SATAN. Quite sure, yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Never "entered into him" as I believe Saint Luke's Gospel puts it?

SATAN. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. And again, you are more or less sure of that?

SATAN. Ask my main squeeze Sheila: If I had entered Judas Iscariot, trust me, he woulda felt my considerable "presence" — if you know what I mean.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes — you and Jimmy Woods — I've heard the rumors. So then, it would be safe to say that the "devil didn't make him do it?"

SATAN. Absolutely — Unless, of course, there's some other devil runnin' around that I don't know about.

EL-FAYOUMY. Very funny. Really, you are quite charming, Satan ... But, let us be quite clear: You did nothing, Satan, nothing, to sway Judas Iscariot towards selling out Jesus of Nazareth, Prince of Peace? Correct?

SATAN. Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY. Not even a tiny nudge?

SATAN. Honestly, he didn't require nudging. Judas was a gimme — it happens like that sometimes.

EL-FAYOUMY. A "gimme," yes. A bad seed.

SATAN. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Well then, how 'bout after he did the deadly

deed? Did you speak with the Savior Betrayer then?

SATAN. I spoke to him, yeah.

EL-FAYOUMY. Care to share?

SATAN. Not a problem. I appeared to Mr. Iscariot at Bathsheeba's Bar and Grill shortly after the night in question. I was actually in town for a guy named Abdul Mazzi-Hatten, but, he never showed. When I encountered Mr. Iscariot, he appeared to have already taken full advantage of the Happy Hour. (*Judas crosses to playing area. Satan meets him.*) Oh. Hello. friend. How are you this evening?

JUDAS. "How am I this evening?" — What are you, a fuckin' mature d', man?

SATAN. I'm Clementine. Clementine of Cappadocia.

JUDAS. Yeah! Well why don't you go home and fuck your mother. Cappa-douche-a, ol'ay!

SATAN. "Doe-sha" — Cappa-doe-sha.

JUDAS. What?

SATAN. It's cappa-doe-sha.

JUDAS. Well lemme ask you something — Cappa-douche-ah — do I look like someone who gives a flying fuck right now about where the fuck you're from?!

SATAN. I'm very sorry. JUDAS. Sorry don't mean shit, dick! Take all the "sorrys" in the world, pile 'em one on top of the other, ya know what you got, Cappa-douche? You got a big pile a fuckin' nuthin' is what you got! Okay?!

SATAN. You're right.

JUDAS. You wanna do somethin' about it?!

SATAN. No sir.

JUDAS. Then go fuck your mother and leave me the fuck alone!

SATAN. I will. Thanks for the advice.

JUDAS. Hey!!! ... Where you going?!

SATAN. It seems like you preferred to be alone.

JUDAS. Why would I prefer that? Whare you saying: I look like some kinda Lone Wolf? Like a fuckin' piranha, bro?

SATAN. Do you mean Pariah?

JUDAS. I mean whar I mean. Whaddya — need a light or somethin'?

SATAN. Oh. Thanks.

JUDAS. Like this lighter?

SATAN. Very nice.

JUDAS. I bought it today, man. Expensive shit, but — I got it like that.

SATAN. I can see you're a man of wealth and substance, I admire that.

JUDAS. "Wealth and substance" — don't push it. So, what's your name?

SATAN. ... Clementine. Clementine of Cappadocia.

JUDAS. Clementine, eh? Isn't that a girl's name?

SATAN. Not in Cappadocia.

JUDAS. Well, it is here, bro — you sure you ain't a girl, man? SATAN. Pretty sure, yeah.

JUDAS. I'm Judas, Judas Iscariot — maybe you heard of me?

SATAN. Nah, man — I'm from out of town.

JUDAS. You never heard of me?

SATAN. Nope.

JUDAS. You don't get around much, do ya Clementine? So whereabouts you from, man — Egypt?

SATAN. Cappadocia.

JUDAS. That's in Egypt though, right?

SATAN. No — Cappadocia is in Cappadocia.

JUDAS. I dig your pyramids, man — and the Sphinx? (*To bartender.*) Bartender! Hey! More of that Mesopotanium wine for my Nubian friend! And some dates and figs too! (*To Satan.*) You smoke opium, Clem?

SATAN. Clem.

JUDAS. And some opium, bartender — the good stuff!

SATAN. You seem like a man on a mission.

JUDAS. Took this girl to a pupper show today, man.

SATAN. Yeah? How was it?

JUDAS. Fuckin' sucked. Puppers are bullshit, ya know?

SATAN. In Cappadocia, we burn puppers!

JUDAS. Well, you people got the right idea over there — char Pharaoh, he's a smart man. Yeah, man. Hey, Clammy — Cheers!

SATAN. Cheers!

JUDAS. Yeah. — Whoa! Hey man, thass a nice shirt, what you pay for it?

SATAN. Two pieces of silver.

JUDAS. Two pieces of silver? HA!!! I'll give you five. Here ya go, switch shirts with me.

SATAN. But, I'm rather fond of this shirt.

JUDAS. C'mon, man — switch shirts — switch shirts, we're buds

now, friends an' shirt — I'll let you be my wing man — get you laid, bro!

SATAN. A nice brunette?

JUDAS. Two brunettes and a eunuch! C'mon, strip!

SATAN. Oh OK. (*They switch shirts. To audience.*) He was so drunk, he didn't even notice my unmisrakably Satanic stretch.

JUDAS. Yo, I dig this shirt, what is it? Silk?

SATAN. From Cappadocia.

JUDAS. Fuckin' Cappadocian Silk! Alright!

SATAN. Your shirt is nice too.

JUDAS. Yeah?

SATAN. Yeah.

JUDAS. Wow ... Thanks, man. That's a nice thing to say. Yeah. Been a while since I heard something nice. That's really nice, bro. (*Bent.*) Hey man, if I told you something corny, would you think that I was, like, a dick?

SATAN. Not at all.

JUDAS. Okay ... I'm kinda mildly afraid of going to hell.

SATAN. Why?

JUDAS. Minor incident last night — a miscalculation on my part — nothing serious. SATAN. Well, one thing I can tell you about hell: As an eternal destination, it's apparently vastly underrated.

JUDAS. Yeah?

SATAN. And "hell" is nothing more than the absence of God, which, if you're looking for a good time, is not at all a bad thing. You wanna play the lute, sing Mary Chapin Carpenter — that's what heavens for. You wanna rock? Apparently, hell's the venue.

JUDAS. Are there, like, girls down there?

SATAN. Not many, but I hear they import them from developing nations on weekends ... But hey, I wouldn't worry about going to Hell.

JUDAS. Even if I did something, perhaps, a little controversial?

SATAN. God understands.

JUDAS. Yeah, but, don't choices have, like, consequences?

SATAN. C'mon, you really think we have a choice?

JUDAS. Well, don't we?

SATAN. Okay: Did you pass by that fuckin' disgusting, stinky fuckin' leper on your way in here tonight?

JUDAS. Who? Freddy?

SATAN. "Freddy," yeah: You think *he* had a choice. Freddy, stinkin'

it up out there, can't scratch his balls for fear a pullin' out his testes? Huh? And what about what's-his-face from the old days — Job? Don't you think if Job had a choice he woulda been like, "Olcay, God, enough! I ger the fucking point?" JUDAS. Yeah, but, Job did say that! SATAN. Yes he did! And what happened next, Judas? God kept right on fucking with him until Job made the only choice available — which was to quietly keep his wrinkly ass cheeks spread wider than the Red Sea 'til God got tired of drilling him for oil! JUDAS. I guess ... But say ... Ah never mind.

SATAN.. What?

JUDAS. Not important.

SATAN. C'mon.

JUDAS. Okay, Well, say what if someone were to betray, for example ... the Messiah — SATAN. — You mean the Messiah, Messiah?

JUDAS. Yeah. Say some idiot had a choice to betray the Messiah or not betray him, and he chose to betray him? SATAN. Gee, I couldn't say. Whadda you think? JUDAS. I'd say the guy's fucked, right?

SATAN. I really couldn't say.

JUDAS. C'mon Clams, I'm just askin'.

SATAN. Well, since you asked, I guess I'd say that if this guy — JUDAS. Cuz this is just some hypo-theoretical guy here — SATAN. Right. I'd say that if this clown we're talking about betrayed the Messiah, that, that, probably, *"If, you'd've been better for that man if he had never been born."*

JUDAS. Never been born?

SATAN. Hey — you asked.

JUDAS. That's heavy, man. That's a 'fuckin' heavy trip man, Clams.

SATAN. I'm thirsty — how 'bout you?

JUDAS. That's fuckin' really heavy.

SATAN. Let's have another round here, Pops! Two barrels of wine and a hooker menu! (*To Judas.*) You okay, man?

JUDAS. Clams, man, I just realized that I haven't been laid in three years, bro. Can ya believe that — guy like me?

SATAN. Three years?

JUDAS. I wasted my prime, man. And then I wasted my prime after my prime.

SATAN. Well, I think you'll prolly get fucked tonight, bro.

ACT TWO

JUDAS. Ya think so?
 SATAN. Yeah. I'm pretty sure.
 JUDAS. I wanna 'nother fuckin' drink. Tonight man, I'm gonna drink this fuckin' bar!
 SATAN. Hey. Judas, lemme ask you something: Who is this Jesus of Nazareth guy I've been hearing about?
 JUDAS. Jesus of Nazareth?
 SATAN. Yeah — I heard he's some kinda somebody.
 JUDAS. Some kinda somebody?
 SATAN. Yeah, that's what I heard.
 JUDAS. Aw, fuck that guy, man — he's a bitch! (*Yusuf El-Fayoumy rises triumphantly*)
 EL-FAYOUMY. "FUCK THAT GUY, HE'S A BITCH"!!! Your Honor! Nothing further!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cross?
 CUNNINGHAM. ... Not at this time.
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Lou, stick around.
 SATAN. I know the drill. (*The gavel bangs*)
 JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Meal break! Fifteen minutes!
 EL-FAYOUMY. Fabiana, free for lunch? (*Gavel bangs. Cross-fade to Judas' lair. Jesus is there with his bucket, alone.*)

"SIC DEUS DILEXIT MUNDUM"

SAINT MONICA. Hey y'all, this is Mary Mags — she the only bitch I let hang with me up here. Tell 'em whatchu gotta say.
 MARY MAGDALENE. My name is Mary of Magdala. I was a disciple of Jesus, I was present at the crucifixion, and I was the first person He appeared to after the resurrection.
 SAINT MONICA. Bitch got *clout!*
 MARY MAGDALENE. I was one of the founders of the Christian faith, and I was known for my ability, in times of difficulty, to be able to turn the hearts of the apostles towards the good.
 SAINT MONICA. The good!
 MARY MAGDALENE. Some people think I was a whore.
 SAINT MONICA. Misogynist bitches!
 MARY MAGDALENE. Other people think Jesus was my husband.

SAINT MONICA. Femin-o-tic bitches!
 MARY MAGDALENE. I was not a whore.
 SAINT MONICA. "Pimps up, hos down!"
 MARY MAGDALENE. I was an unmarried woman in a town of ill repute.
 SAINT MONICA. *Hu*repe!
 MARY MAGDALENE. And also, I was not the wife of Jesus either.
 SAINT MONICA. Still love ya!
 MARY MAGDALENE. But, I am pretty sure that I was his best friend. We shared an intimacy that I cannot put to words except to say we saw into each other's hearts and were in love with what we found ...
 SAINT MONICA. Love!
 MARY MAGDALENE. I also knew Judas Iscariot very well.
 SAINT MONICA. Gangsta!
 MARY MAGDALENE. Out of the twelve, he was the most moody and the most impetuous, and yet, he was my favorite.

SAINT MONICA. Tupaq!
MARY MAGDALENE. And in some ways, I think he was Jesus' favorite too ... Judas was almost an alter-ego to Jesus — he was the shadow to Jesus' light. He was the sour to the sweet and the cool to the warm. They often walked together, more often than not arguing — no one could get a rise out of Jesus like Judas could. I can remember times when Jesus emerged from an argument with Judas positively furious — shaking his head wildly, snorting and clicking his teeth, red-faced with exasperation — and he would tell me what they had been fighting about — still agitated — but, inevitably, he would end up staring into space and sighing — smiling. I think that if someone were to say that Judas was good for Jesus that they would not be mistaken ...

Saint Monica.

MARY MAGDALENE. When I think of Judas, my heart breaks. SAINT MONICA. But Mary Mags: If we are all eternal, and if human life is only the first mile in a billion, do you honestly believe that God could abandon any mothafuckah so soon in the journey? MARY MAGDALENE. I don't know. Jesus never talks about it. That's how I know His heart hurts worse than mine. (*The gruel bangs*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD.

Next witness! CUNNINGHAM. Defense calls Sigmund Freud, your Honor. BAILIFF. Name!

SIGMUND FREUD. Dr. Sigmund Shlomo Freud.

CUNNINGHAM. Dr. Freud, would it be accurate to say you qualify as an expert in the field of modern psychiatry?

SIGMUND FREUD. Fraulin — I AM modern psychiatry.

EL-FAYOUMY. Objection, your Honor! — the witness is boasting!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Overruled!

EL-FAYOUMY. But a "boaster," your Grace — it is disastrous, really!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Siddown, El-Fayoumy!

EL-FAYOUMY. I lung to obey you, your Grace — but let the record reflect that Prosecution has grave reservations about this man's alleged so-called "standing" as a psychiatric expert! SIGMUND FREUD. Perhaps a quick jaunt to London for a leisurely perusal of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volumes One through Twenty-four would set your mind at ease.

EL-FAYOUMY. Perhaps it would if you were indeed ... Oh, I see. Right. Yes. Of course. Uh ... Yes. (*He sits.*) CUNNINGHAM. Dr. Freud, you are, in fact, the "Founder of Psychoanalysis," correct?

SIGMUND FREUD. I am.

CUNNINGHAM. You maintained a private practice in neuropathology for nearly a half century; is that not so?

SIGMUND FREUD. It is.

CUNNINGHAM. You were on the cover of Time magazine in an issue dedicated to the greatest scientific minds of the 20th century.

SIGMUND FREUD. I was.

CUNNINGHAM. Are you familiar with the case history of one Judas Iscariot?

SIGMUND FREUD. Most certainly.

CUNNINGHAM. Dr. Freud, in your expert opinion, can a suicide victim be pre-certified as psychotic?

SIGMUND FREUD. Without question. Man's insatiate for self-preservation is his most supple and reflexive muscle. When that muscle fails, it is because his mind has failed. A decision to take one's own life can only be precipitated by a failure of the mind — an irrational rebellion against man's most basic instinct — to endure and live. Therefore, yes — the victim of suicide must be pre-certified as, indeed, psychotic.

CUNNINGHAM. In your expert opinion Dr. Freud, was Judas Iscariot a psychotic?

SIGMUND FREUD. Without question.

CUNNINGHAM. And are psychotics responsible for their actions?

SIGMUND FREUD. No they are not. For example, say I have a bad bout of influenza. As a result of my bad influenza, I sneeze rudely, but involuntarily, in your face. The next day, you wake up with the same flu. Did I cause your flu? No. My flu caused your flu. I only sneezed because I was sick.

CUNNINGHAM. In your opinion, Dr. Freud, does Judas Iscariot belong in hell?

SIGMUND FREUD. No, he does not.

CUNNINGHAM. Explain.

SIGMUND FREUD. Suicide is a direct sign of mental illness. CUNNINGHAM. But did he become mentally ill after allegedly betraying Jesus of Nazareth, or was he mentally ill to begin with?

SIGMUND FREUD. Pre-programmed, yes. You must under-

strand: Normal people do nor kill themselves — even under extreme duress.

CUNNINGHAM. And what would you say to people who would say that Judas brought about his own mental illness by betraying Jesus and getting him crucified?

SIGMUND FREUD. I would say this: Number one, you cannot conjure or "bring about" mental illness. Number two, any god who punishes the mentally ill is not worth worshipping; and, number three, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" — the person who could have prevented this tragedy was Jesus, not Judas. He chose not to.

CUNNINGHAM. But isn't Judas responsible because he did what he did of his own free will?

SIGMUND FREUD. Fraulein, I once had a suicidal patient leap through my fourth-floor window to her death. She exercised her free will — did I tell her estate for the broken plate glass window she leapt through? Of course not! My friend Winston Churchill, who provided me safe haven from the Nazis in 1938, likes to say: "The price of greatness is responsibility." I believe firmly in taking responsibility. So, after the unfortunate woman's death, I exercised responsibility for my greatness — by moving my offices to the ground floor. I should think God would have done the same.

CUNNINGHAM. Your witness.
(Freud yawns big and disdainfully.)

SIGMUND FREUD. *(Re: the yawn.)* Excuse me.

EL-FAYOUMY. So, Herr Doctor — I must admit I am intimidated to be in the midst of such greatness. After all, you are a "genius," correct?

SIGMUND FREUD. Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY. An "expert?"

SIGMUND FREUD. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. A big brain.

SIGMUND FREUD. Unequivocally.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. "Unequivocally." Yes. Nice word. And it rolls off your tongue so effortlessly — really, I am impressed. *(Freud again yawns big and disdainfully.)* A little tired, are we, Doctor? Perhaps a kilo or two of fine grade Bolivian *flake* would restore your pep!

SIGMUND FREUD. Excuse me?

EL-FAYOUMY. Cocaine, Doctor! "Blow," "flakes," "rock" — "she don't lie" — does she, Doc?

SIGMUND FREUD. What?

EL-FAYOUMY. Over a twelve-year span, you consumed cocaine in what can only be categorized as prodigiously massive quantities, correct?

SIGMUND FREUD. As part of my research, yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. "Research" — yes. And after twelve years of round the clock research, you finally came to the conclusion that ingesting staggering amounts of powder up your nose was, perhaps, unhealthy?

SIGMUND FREUD. I was trying to determine its medicinal value.

EL-FAYOUMY. Is that your real nose?

SIGMUND FREUD. Your mother denied you her breast, didn't she? EL-FAYOUMY. I'll thank you to let me ask the questions, Dr. Fried.

SIGMUND FREUD. *Freud!*

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh, yes, Freud, of course, forgive me, I made a "you" slip, didn't I? ... Anyway, last question, Mr. Expert Genius: Dr. Freud: You were an avowed atheist all your life, correct?

SIGMUND FREUD. Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY. And then you died and found out what?

SIGMUND FREUD. I experienced anti-Semitism as a child — it prejudiced me against all religion.

EL-FAYOUMY. Einstein experienced prejudice — but he wasn't wrong like you, was he? My cousin Wagui can't count to ten without drooling, but he wasn't wrong like you either, was he? Was he?

SIGMUND FREUD. Intelligence and faith are two different things!

EL-FAYOUMY. Are they Dr. Freud? Because I would say that you can't have one without the other. But, of course, I'm not a brilliant genius expert like you, am I?

SIGMUND FREUD. I had a wonderful vibrant mind and my intellectual curiosity was boundless! *(El-Fayoumy makes a violin playing gesture, as.)*

EL-FAYOUMY. Good day, Doctor, go blow your nose — you are excused!

CUNNINGHAM. *(Rites.)* Dr. Freud, do sane people commit suicide — yes or no?

SIGMUND FREUD. No! *(Towards El-Fayoumy.)* Though they can sometimes be tempted to *murder!*

EL-FAYOUMY. Go murder an eight ball, egghead!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. That's enough! Next witness! *(Gavel*

bangs.) Next witness!

EL-FAYOUMY. Irresistibly alluring Majesty, prosecution calls legendary Hawaiian singer and popular entertainer Don Ho to the strand!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Don Ho's not dead!

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh ... Well, thank God for that. In that case, Prosecution calls Caiaphas the Elder, High Priest of the Sanhedrin to the strand!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (Rising.) Right ... Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, at this time, I must excuse myself from these proceedings until such time as said witness has concluded testimony. Before his ascension into the lap of the Lord, Caiaphas the Elder and I were partners in a successful chain of kosher pizza parlors in the East Purgatory — for that reason, at this time, I must step down. *Bailiff!!!* Get your ass over there, put on those glasses, and adjudicate — pronto! Proceed. (*Judge exits as El-Fayoumy approaches Fabiana.*)

EL-FAYOUMY. Fabiana, may I borrow a pen?

CUNNINGHAM. Only if I can shove it through your eye.

EL-FAYOUMY. (*Confidentially*) Fabiana, how can I prove my sincerity to you? Even though you are always here and I am always here — still — I think of you when you aren't here even though you are always here.

BAILIFF. Next witness, please!

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes — I obey (*To Cunningham.*) Later we shall discuss. (*To Bailiff.*) Yes. Julius zee Bailiff, correct? May I call you Julius?

BAILIFF. Alright.

EL-FAYOUMY. How about Jules?

BAILIFF. I guess.

EL-FAYOUMY. So tell me — shall we commence?

BAILIFF. Thard be good.

EL-FAYOUMY. Wise J. Prosecution calls Caiaphas the Elder! (*Caiaphas enters.*) Caiaphas the Elder, High Priest of the Sanhedrin, hello to you.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Hello.

EL-FAYOUMY. "Shalom" — as it were.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Shalom.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder: Perhaps you can clear this up — is there a Caiaphas the Younger?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. And yet, you are the Elder?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. I see. Yes. Thank you. My cousin Amghad Wahba owes me five bucks now. So, Caiaphas the Elder: In the Bible, it says that Judas Iscariot made an approach to you — a dark and nefarious approach — to offer up the location of Jesus of Nazareth, and to, in fact, turn him in to you and the authorities. Correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder: Are you saying that it was Judas Iscariot who approached you, and not the other way around? CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Because I saw in a film once, Caiaphas the Elder, where it was *you* who approached *him*. CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. It was Judas Iscariot who approached me at the Temple, not the other way around.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. But still, even though your statement is indeed confirmed by all four Gospels, Caiaphas the Elder, I must ask you again: Did you approach Judas Iscariot about betraying his leader and Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I did not. EL-FAYOUMY. Why not? Jesus was big headache to you, no? You were legitimately concerned that the hir-jinx of Jesus would lead to an uprising and a resulting crushing Roman massacre of your Jewish people in retribution, weren't you?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I was. EL-FAYOUMY. So, why not reach out and touch someone, Caiaphas the Elder?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Are you asking me why I didn't try to approach one of the apostles initially?

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I didn't think it would work.

EL-FAYOUMY. Why not? CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. There's an old rabbinical saying: "Let them kill you, but do not cross the line." During my eighteen-year reign as head of the Sanhedrin and guardian of the Temple, I dealt with countless messiahs, zealots, rebels, and fanatical believers. My experience in these matters taught me: They get killed, yes, but as a rule — they do not cross the line.

EL-FAYOUMY. "Cross the line," yes — this means what? CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. To betray your ideals. Your conscience. The law.

EL-FAYOUMY. Judas crossed that line, didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. He did.
EL-FAYOUMY. He betrayed the ideal in betraying Jesus — the Rabbinical ideal. He crossed the line.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Do you admire that?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No. I do not.

EL-FAYOUMY. But why not? We all cross the line sometimes, don't we?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. We are all capable of crossing the line. Thankfully, we do not all do it.

EL-FAYOUMY. But really, Caiaphas the Elder, what's the big deal? You cross a line, so what? Just draw yourself another line, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No. Not correct.

EL-FAYOUMY. Why not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. The line comes from God, doesn't it? The Line is given. We do not create it, and thus, it is not ours to modify. It is only ours to obey or betray.

EL-FAYOUMY. I see. Caiaphas the Elder: When Pontius Pilate first arrived in Judea, he visited you in the Temple, did he not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. He did.

EL-FAYOUMY. And as a show of his force and might, Pontius Pilate attempted to place symbols of Rome in the Temple, which was, to your people, a great desecration of your holy place of worship, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Correct.

EL-FAYOUMY. It would have constituted a worshipping of false idols, yes?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder, when you saw Pontius Pilate attempting this, what did you do?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I told him that he must remove the pagan symbols.

EL-FAYOUMY. And what did Pilate say to that?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I believe the gist of his reply was,

"What are you gonna do about it, Curly?"

EL-FAYOUMY. And, what *did* you do?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. "... I knelt before him —

EL-FAYOUMY. And begged for mercy?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. Groveled for forgiveness?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No! I removed my headdress, bared a fellow Jew, I confess he disgusted me.

my throat to him, and bid him slit it.

EL-FAYOUMY. In other words, Caiaphas the Elder, you "let him kill you, but you did not cross the line."

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I guess so. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. You did not cross the line.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No. I did not.

EL-FAYOUMY. Judas crossed it, though — didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. He did.

EL-FAYOUMY. Interesting. And, by the way, what was the result of your stand off with Pilate regarding the sanctity of the Temple?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Pilate backed off.

EL-FAYOUMY. He didn't put up the pagan symbols, did he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. You held the line.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Your integrity castrated him, didn't it — his little Roman balls rolling down the Temple hill like withered purple grapes! Yes?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I have no response to that.

EL-FAYOUMY. As well you shouldn't! Now then, last question: Caiaphas the Elder, it has been said that in Western culture the most prized virtue is honesty, but in Eastern culture — which would include Judea at that time — In Eastern culture, the most prized virtue was and is loyalty. Caiaphas the Elder: Do you agree with said hypothesis?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Councilor, there are 613 sacred laws in our Torah. Complying with these laws requires honesty *and* loyalty. But the most important requirement of the Law is *obedience* to it. That is what is most prized.

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Fair enough. But in your opinion, was Judas Iscariot "loyal"?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Obviously not.

EL-FAYOUMY. Was he "honest"?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder: Was Judas Iscariot obedient?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. To his own will and desires — yes. I believe that he was.

EL-FAYOUMY. And to service that will and those desires, Judas crossed the line. Didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. He served a necessary purpose, but as a fellow Jew, I confess he disgusted me.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder, I thank you — and may I add, you are much more handsome in person than when they portray you on the silver screen! (*Fabiana rises.*)

CUNNINGHAM. "High Priest of the Sanhedrin" — that was an extremely powerful and prestigious position in Judea — correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Correct.

CUNNINGHAM. In fact, except for the Roman governor and King Herod, the "High Priest" was, in actuality, the most powerful position *in* Judea, was it not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

CUNNINGHAM. Would you mind looking me in the eye when you respond to a question?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. My position was very important. As High Priest, I maintained the sacred laws, the safety of the populace, and our tradition.

CUNNINGHAM. Caiaphas — is there a reason you won't meet my gaze? — or, is ignoring women simply another component of the tradition you were charged to maintain?

EL-FAYOUMY. (*Rising.*) Objection, Julius! The witness is not just a holy man — but a very holy man! Defense counsel is aware she is a juicy pulchritudinous dish — and yet, the witness is being berated for merely avoiding the salacious temptations of her intoxicatingly firm and fervently aromatic flesh! I move to censure, really!

CUNNINGHAM. I withdraw the question.

EL-FAYOUMY. Sexy vixen — you are warned!

BAILIFF. Hey!

EL-FAYOUMY. Oh! Julius! Yest Forgive me! She makes my organs bounce! Yes. Uh. (*To Fabiana.*) Sorry. (*To Julius.*) Yes. (*He sits.*)

CUNNINGHAM. Caiaphas, you stated to the prosecution that Judas Iscariot "crossed the line" and that he "disgusted you" — correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Correct.

CUNNINGHAM. Well then maybe you can help me out here, because I'm a little confused. Judas Iscariot handed Jesus of Nazareth over to you, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

CUNNINGHAM. And then *you* handed Jesus of Nazareth over to Pontius Pilate, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER.. I did. CUNNINGHAM. So what exactly is the difference between you and Judas Iscariot — cuz unless I'm missing something here, I fail

to see it.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Between me and Judas? Big difference. CUNNINGHAM. Caiaphas, you were a rabbi and a Jew. Jesus was a rabbi and a Jew. Is it not crossing the line for one rabbi to hand over another rabbi to be killed by pagans?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Jesus was a blaspheming, seditious rabbi, and I did not know for sure that he would be killed.

CUNNINGHAM. But the penalty for sedition was crucifixion, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. That was the Roman charge, not mine. CUNNINGHAM. Yes. Your charge was blasphemy — and what is the penalty for blasphemy, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Your Honor, I will not sit here and be blamed for the death of Christ yet again!

CUNNINGHAM. No one's blaming you for the death of Christ, Caiaphas, I'm simply asking you a question which I am directing you to answer now before this court: You charged Jesus with blasphemy. What was the penalty for blasphemy, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Stoning, followed by hanging."

CUNNINGHAM. So then how can you sit there and pretend that you didn't know for sure that Jesus of Nazareth would be killed?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Jesus could have easily saved himself.

CUNNINGHAM. Saved himself how?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. By retracting his blasphemous claims! Our 'Torah' has 613 sacred laws — I can't even count how many Jesus broke or treated with wanton disregard and disdain! He broke the laws that came from the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! He violated the word of God. He violated the laws of Moses. He consorted with the unclean, and women, and prostitutes. He performed miracles on the Sabbath. He proclaimed himself Messiah! He forgave sin! *Who was he to forgive sin?* Only God can do that! If that's nor crossing the line, then I don't know what is!

CUNNINGHAM. Jesus was fulfilling your Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah to the letter —

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. — He was also fulfilling the prophecies in Deuteronomy which warned against "false messiahs and marvel workers"! It would have been one thing had he confined himself to the forests and rivers spouting his ravings as the Baptist did, but at the Great Temple? I would have been derelict to not put a stop to it. He was whipping people! Kicking them. Threatening to destroy the Temple! Calling it a den of thieves! If someone did

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that in your Saint Patrick's Cathedral, would you not arrest them? CUNNINGHAM. And yet, Judas Iscariot, who came forward in the face of this "great threat," is, in your eyes, not a traitor but a traitor. A traitor who, in your words, "disgusted you." Why is that, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Because he handed Jesus over for money.

CUNNINGHAM. And why did you hand Jesus over, Caiaphas? CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. The words and deeds of Jesus were leading towards rebellion — and the Price of rebellion under Roman rule was a bloodbath. A massacre, Counselor. So I determined that it were better to have one man dead than a thousand — that's why.

CUNNINGHAM. I see. So, you were looking out for the common Jewish man, is that correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I was.

CUNNINGHAM. Were you a common Jewish man, Caiaphas? CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. In the eyes of God, we are all the same. CUNNINGHAM. But how about in the eyes of the common Jewish man? You were seen as an aristocrat, weren't you?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I came from wealth. CUNNINGHAM. Would you say that you were popular with the common Jewish man?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. My job was a sacred one — not a popularity contest.

CUNNINGHAM. The high Temple taxes that you inflicted on your people, would you say that made you more popular with the common Jewish man or less popular?

EL-FAYOUMY. Objection, your Honor! Vixen is badgering!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Sustained.

CUNNINGHAM. The exchange rates at the Temple were also extremely unfavorable to the common Jewish man, and the purification pools outside the temple — where the common Jewish man was required by law to be cleansed before being permitted to enter the temple — the purification pools were not free either, were they?!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No no, I'll answer: The laws were the laws and the rates were the rates.

CUNNINGHAM. And did you have a sliding scale for the poor?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

CUNNINGHAM. So the poor — who constituted a large per-

centage of the common Jewish man at that time — remained impure and unclean and were denied the right of worship. CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. You've made your point. CUNNINGHAM. No, I don't think I have! Your position, Caiaphas, did not require you to be popular with the common Jewish man, did it?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. My position required me to answer to God.

CUNNINGHAM. Did God appoint you High Priest of the Sanhedrin?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. It was with God's blessing —

CUNNINGHAM. — It was with *Rome's* blessing, Caiaphas! You were appointed by *Rome*, and at the end of the day, for the eighteen years you served, that's who you had to answer to, and that's who you were required to be popular with! And the day you showed Rome that you couldn't handle your own people was the day you'd have been thrown out on your ass — isn't that true?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. I belonged to God, not *Rome*! My job was to uphold the 613 sacred laws, and to protect my Temple and my people — and that's what I did!

CUNNINGHAM. And was not Jesus of Nazareth one of your people, Caiaphas?! Whether he was a messiah, or a prophet, or a holy man, or a crazy man — was he not one of your own?! And was it not considered the height of treachery to betray Jewish blood to your oppressors?! Come on, Caiaphas! Tell us that it did not prick your conscience to turn Jesus, a fellow Jew, over to the Romans! Tell us that handing over a fellow Rabbi to his certain death at the hands of the enemy didn't violate your sense of "crossing the line," and your knowledge of the law! Tell us, Caiaphas, that, at the end of the day, there was a *difference* — in the eyes of *God* — between what you did and what Judas did! (*Beat.*) This is purgatory, Caiaphas — I've got all day.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. ... In terms of result: no difference. CUNNINGHAM. How about in terms of follow-through: Judas recanted and tried to return the silver, did he not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. He did.

CUNNINGHAM. And did you, Caiaphas, do anything at all to try to prevent Jesus' death?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

CUNNINGHAM. And therein lies the real difference between you and Judas Iscariot, does it not? And yet, you sit here and say how

Judas "crossed the line" and that he "disgusted" you! And if that's true, Caiaphas, then I wonder, how you must've felt about yourself.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. That's between me and God.

CUNNINGHAM. Well then for your sake, Caiaphas, I sure hope that your God has a more forward-thinking attitude than Judas' God does. Step down, you're excused.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder, Judas approached you — correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. He didn't have to approach you, Caiaphas the Elder, did he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. No.

EL-FAYOUMY. And yet he did.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Of his own free will.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. And accepted payment for his betrayal.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY. Payment. Judas did not say, "Caiaphas the Elder, pur your money away, miser, this one's on the arm," right?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Right.

EL-FAYOUMY. Caiaphas the Elder, I think we all realize the precarious position you were in trying to protect your citizens from Roman reprisal.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. And it makes you feel good to say that, doesn't it? After two thousand years of persecution and vilification, you finally get around to saying, "Hey, we know it wasn't you and your people's fault." Is that it?

EL-FAYOUMY. Good Caiaphas the Elder, I was only trying to —

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. Win your case, right? I tell you what: You people call me, I come. You question, I answer — but please — never say that you realize the position I was in, because you have no idea the position I was in. And never try to excuse or forgive me, because, I'm not interested in your forgiveness. God's forgiveness: This interests me. Yours? I could care less. Why? Because you have no idea. The people who need forgiving? The people who perpetrated the lies and exaggerations that became sanctimonious fact and led to hatred and violence for the past two thousand years? They are the ones who need forgiving — and not by you — but by me — me — and my people. It's the writers of the Gospel who need forgiveness — nor me. No sir. I know what it is to suffer. Do you?

I don't think so. (*To Julius*) Julius: my best to Frank.

EL-FAYOUMY. You're very handsome, Caiaphas.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER. If I am, it's cuz God made me, not cuz you said so. Good day. (*And Caiaphas ambles off wearily. Gavel bangs. Crossfade w/*)

SAINT THOMAS. My name is Thomas. At the last supper, I was the first one to say that I would die for Jesus; and I was also the first one to head for the hills doing ninety when the Romans came and arrested him. And then, when Jesus resurrected himself, I was also the guy who said I wouldn't believe He was who He was unless I could see with my own eyes the holes in his hands and personally inspect them and touch them — as if I was some qualified medical examiner, like I was "Quincy" or something. But the thing of it was, Jesus showed them to me. And not only that, He let me touch them. In a ministry based entirely on the virtues of faith, He gave me proof. I had no faith, and he gave it to me for free. I don't know why I got the benefit of my doubt, and Judas didn't get help with his. And, I'm not saying this cuz I liked the guy — cuz personally, I thought Judas was a bit of a jerk-off. Actually, "fuckin' dick" would be more accurate. Judas was the kinda guy — at least with me — where, one minute he's your friend, and the next minute, he's making fun of you in front of everybody. He used to like to say that the reason Jesus had to do the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes was because I am all the food when no one was looking. Stuff like that. But then other times, he could be real nice, like, once we were partnered together to go into town to heal people and cast out demons, and well, I had some problems that day — everyone I tried to heal ended up getting worse, in fact, this one lady I almost blinded and another guy started going into convulsions — but Judas fixed it. He healed them — he really did — and that tells me his faith was genuine. And when we got back to camp that night, he didn't tell anybody how I messed up; in fact, he said I did a good job, and, I appreciated that. I knew Jesus knew it was bullshit; but I appreciated the gesture. I thought it showed largeness on Judas' part. And the thing is; Judas was kind of a dick, but he wasn't shallow or Perry. He really was pretty large. He wasn't the best, but he was far from the worst. Jesus liked him, liked him a lot in fact. Judas was right up there in the top three with Mary Magdalene and Peter, who, by the way, could also be a dick sometimes too. The trick with Peter was: Never talk about fish. The guy was crazy for fish. Say something wrong about a fish and forget-

tabourit. The guy would go crazy. Anyways — some people say Judas did what he did cuz he was greedy. Personally, I think that's bullshit. The guy wasn't wandering around the desert for three years with Jesus and a bunch of ragamuffins like us cuz he was looking to get rich. Other people say that the devil got into him. Again, bullshit. Judas was loyal to a fault. Obsessively loyal even. Judas would have raken on the devil and his entire army one against a thousand if he had to, and he woulda done it with relish. Other people say Judas did it cuz he knew the ship was sinking and he was trying to get himself a nur to have something to fall back on. Lissen; Judas was not a "fall back" guy, he was one hundred percent "fall forward." And to me, that deserves some consideration. I was not "fall forward." Not by a long shot. And neither were most of the others. Judas was a dick, but he deserved better. Just one saint's opinion.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next witness!

CUNNINGHAM. ... Your Honor, at this time, defense would like to introduce Exhibit A-14, ancient surveillance footage of an event that occurred less than twenty-four hours after Jesus' arrest. Lights please. (*A squad room in Jerusalem.*)

SOLDIER 1. Pilate gonna kick yo ass!

SOLDIER 2. Pilate gonna see that ass — he gonna kick ir two times!

SOLDIER 3. Yo — when Pilate see this mothahfuckah's ass, he gonna be like, "Centurion! It's time to whup ass!"

SOLDIER 1. He gonna rape yo wives!

SOLDIER 2. He gonna take your cattle!

SOLDIER 3. He gonna kick yo cattle's ass too!

SOLDIER 1. And yo sheep and yo lambs.

SOLDIER 2. Pilate gonna cancel yo grammuthas WTC check, B!

(*Pilate enters.*)

PILATE. What's all this damn ruckus about?

SOLDIERS 1, 2, and 3. All hail Pontius Pilate: Hail, hail, hail!

PILATE. Is there a problem here?

SOLDIER 1. Judas is trying to recant!

PILATE. Hold up a minute, who?

SOLDIER 3. Judas Iscariot — from the Jesus of Nazareth crew.

SOLDIER 2. This stinky mothahfuckah right here!

JUDAS. Jesus is an innocent man — please, please —

SOLDIER 1. Should we start whupping ass now?

JUDAS. He's innocent! Please. Please. Jesus is innocent.

PILATE. C'mon now Judas, them "San-who-saids" — hold up a

sec. (*To Soldier 2.*) Yo Curr — what they call themselves?

SOLDIER 2. Sanhedrin, sir.

PILATE. Right. Judas, them Sand-head-sons paid you thirty pieces of silver, now that's four months wages, that ain't no chicken feed. JUDAS. I made a mistake, please, please, you don't understand, man —

PILATE. I understand perfectly. You sold our your brother, now you feel guilty, so you tryin' ta come in here talkin' 'bout, "It was dark, I kissed the wrong mothahfuckah," but we Romans, man — Romans don't dance that song.

JUDAS. I'm recanting —

PILATE. You can't recant! (*To his boys.*) Hey, fellas, remember the last Semite strolled up in here talkin' 'bour 'I recant'?! (*To Judas.*) Believe me, J-Crew, you don' wanna do that. Wharchu need to do is relax, brother — take the wifey to a puppet show, sumpthin'. This ain't nuthin' but a little PR opportunity before the holidays, thass all —

JUDAS. — Bur he's innocent. Please. Please —

PILATE. Hey now, lissen: Judas, we don't give no good goddamn 'bout this Jesus — he just a mothahfuckah talks a lotta shit. Everybody talks shit, even *I've* been known to talk a little shit on the once in a while. Thing is: We ain't tryin' to lay down no heavy charge on that Nazareth boy — we just gonna bear down his ass a little, make them Sanhen-ja-call-irs happy so's we can all live in peace. I mean: Donrchu wanna live in peace, Judas? Ain't that what it's all about?

JUDAS. Yeah?

PILATE. Okay then. I mean after all, brother, ain't like we lookin' to crucify the mothahfuckah!

CUNNINGHAM. Defense calls Pontius Pilate!

EL-FAYOUMY. *I object!*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. On whar grounds?

EL-FAYOUMY. On the grounds that it is objectionable!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Overruled!

EL-FAYOUMY. But, your holiness really, it is objectionable: I sense it although I cannot put it into words.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Overruled!

BAILIFF. Name!

PILATE. Pontius Pilate.

CUNNINGHAM. Pontius Pilate?

PILATE. That's right, baby.

EL-FAYOUMY. (Rising.) But are you a *licensed* pilot?
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Siddown, El-Fayoumy!
CUNNINGHAM. Pontius Pilate ... Judas Iscariot came down to your tent to recant his testimony — correct?

PILATE. On the advice of counsel, I cite my right to plead the fifth amendment.

CUNNINGHAM. You then told Judas Iscariot that Jesus was only gonna receive a "bear down," correct?

PILATE. On the advice of council, I cite my right to plead the Fifth Amendment.

CUNNINGHAM. You bare responsibility for the death of Jesus Christ — not Judas Iscariot, but you — isn't that correct, Pontius Pilate?

PILATE. On the advice of counsel, blah blah blah. (*To Judge*) Your Honor, I got a two P.M. free time — can I go now?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. This won't take long, Pontius.

CUNNINGHAM. Judas came to your office and begged you on bended knee to take the money and release Jesus, and you refused him! Judas recanted. He tried to return the money — first to the Sanhedrin and then to you. Do you deny that?

PILATE. Hey, if I had messed up as bad as that cat had, I woulda tried to rebare them ducats too.

CUNNINGHAM. So you admit that Judas did try?

PILATE. No. I do not admit that he tried. Did you hear me admit that?

CUNNINGHAM. We all know what happened, Pilate — we just saw the tape!

PILATE. Ain't nothin' on that so-called tape implicates me of anything but trying to find a peacefully non-lethal solution to a potentially incendiary problem.

CUNNINGHAM. Right. Mr. Pilate, you were the fifth prefect of Judea, correct?

PILATE. Correct.

CUNNINGHAM. A prefect being what?

PILATE. Governor. Also known as procurator. My official title was Heg-e-mon.

CUNNINGHAM. Heg-e-mon?

PILATE. Translated from the Greek, it means "Excellency." CUNNINGHAM. I see. And you governed or procured over Judea from twenty-six to thirty-six A.D., correct?

PILATE. Longest ten years of my life.

CUNNINGHAM. Why do you say that? PILATE. You ever been to Judea, missy? It ain't Paris, France — believe that.

CUNNINGHAM. I see.

PILATE. Yeah, that Moses musta read the map backwards — misplaced his bifocals, sumpchin' — cuz if that was the "Promised Land," shif, them Jews shoulda held out for a better promise. CUNNINGHAM. You didn't care for Judea much?

PILATE. Care for it? Arm pit of the Empire if you ask me. No atmosphere, nuthin'. Hor. Dusty. Flies everywhere. Complete lack of culture and amusements. I'd a rather spent ten years up inside the crack a my ass ... But, Augustus ordered me to keep the peace there, so I obeyed my emperor and did my duty.

CUNNINGHAM. And kept the peace?

PILATE. The Pax Romana, baby, the prime directive — dass right. CUNNINGHAM. And, under your rule, how was the peace kept in Judea, Mr. Pilate?

PILATE. By any means necessary.

CUNNINGHAM. Violently?

PILATE. Violently or otherwise — they was free to have it any ways they wanted. CUNNINGHAM. According to Philo of Alexandria who wrote about you in forty-one C.E., your tenure as governor of Rome was known for its "constantly repeated executions without trial, wanton injustices, graft, and ceaseless and grievous cruelty" — care to comment?

PILATE. No, I do not.

CUNNINGHAM. During your reign as procurator in Jerusalem, how many deaths did you order?

PILATE. A lot — dont apologize for it either. Them Jews was rowdy.

CUNNINGHAM. Rowdy?

PILATE. Dass, right — rowdy. As in: nor docile. As in: A muthah-fuckah had to put his foot down.

CUNNINGHAM. And you put it down, didn't you?

PILATE. Damn skippy I did. Orders from Rome — what's a brotha to do?

CUNNINGHAM. During your tenure in Judea, how many crucifixions would you say you ordered?

PILATE. A lot less than my predecessor — that's for damn sure! That morthahfuckah would crucify a Semite for yellin' "Fire" at a barbecue

— man would go buck-wild from *jump!* Me? I reduced crucifixions in Palestine by seventy percent, and now, that's documented. CUNNINGHAM. Well that's lovely, Mr. Pilate, but I'll direct you now to answer the question posed to you.

PILATE. Which was what?

CUNNINGHAM. How many crucifixions did you preside over during your time in Jerusalem?

PILATE. I'd say ... Few hundred — give or take. So what?

CUNNINGHAM. Over 700 crucifixions while you on assignment in Judea. Does that sound about right?

PILATE. Sound good to me. Sure.

CUNNINGHAM. And you publicly washed your hands of how many of them, Mr. Pilate? (*Beats.*)

PILATE. I don't know what you mean by that.

CUNNINGHAM. I mean that, other than Jesus of Nazareth, out of over 700 crucifixions and countless executions, did you ever — in any other instance — publicly wash your hands and attempt to abdicate responsibility for your actions, Mr. Pilate? (*Pause.*)

PILATE. I don't recall.

CUNNINGHAM. You backpedaled because you knew it was wrong, didn't you?

PILATE. Romans don't have backpedals.

CUNNINGHAM. You knew Jesus was a holy man or a fool, but whatever he was, you believed him when he said that his kingdom wasn't on earth, didn't you?

PILATE. See now, I don't recall that conversation.

CUNNINGHAM. You don't "recall" that conversation? You know what, Mr. Pilate, why don't you say that again so I can slap a perjury charge on you! You ordered the death of Christ — you and you alone — and then you pawned it off on Jesus' "reticence" and Judas' "imperiousness" and the "politics" of the Sanhedrin and the "rowdiness" of the Jewish people — is that not the case, Pontius Pilate? Yes or no?

PILATE. You can go on squawking if you want to — my conscience is clean. What you need to do is take it up with them Jews. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Pilate, were the high priests of Jerusalem authorized to order a death sentence?

PILATE. No, they were not.

CUNNINGHAM. Was King Herod authorized to issue a death sentence?

PILATE. No, he was not.

CUNNINGHAM. How about the Jewish people themselves — were they free to issue death sentences at their whim and fancy?

PILATE. No.

CUNNINGHAM. One man, Mr. Pilate. In all of Judea, one man alone had the authority to put another man to death. Who was that man, Mr. Pilate?

PILATE. Am I on trial here? Cuz lass time I checked, it was your client Judas Iscariot freezing his narrow ass off in the ninth circle of hell — not me!

CUNNINGHAM. My client recanted with a remorseful heart and was ignored!

PILATE. Then you need to take that up with them Jews, not me. I mean, this ain't some new theory I'm introducing to ya! It's documented. Ain't no Sherlock Holmes/Nancy Drew mystery here, lady: Them Jews was cantankerous. Ornery. They worshipped a jealous, angry and vengeful God — and guess what? Surprise surprise: They was angry, jealous and vengeful themselves. I never had a problem in Judea wasn't caused by some rabble-rousing, no-account Jew. Believe me, sister — you need to talk to them, not me.

CUNNINGHAM. It's always the Jews, Mr. Pilate, isn't it?

PILATE. Well it sure as shit was in Judea, missy ... CUNNINGHAM. You wanna know what I really think, Mr. Pilate? I think this whole story about you hemming and hawing about what to do with Jesus is just a load of made-up crap written by Jewish Christian evangelists seeking to broaden the appeal of the Jesus story to the Roman Empire. There is nothing that we know about you, Mr. Pilate — absolutely nothing — that suggests for even a second that you would have even a passing hesitation about putting *any* Jew to death — let alone a revolutionary figure like Jesus who was being proclaimed the Messiah, who had entered the city of Jerusalem to crowds of cheering supporters, and who had the very next day incited a riot at the Temple. You hated your assignment, you hated Judea, and, Mr. Pilate, you hated Jews. Hated them. You hated the Jews because they contested you. You hated them because they fought back. You hated them because they clung to their religious beliefs and were willing to die for them. But most of all, I think you hated them because you knew they were stronger than you. I think that bothered you a great deal. I think, Mr. Pilate, that it made you resentful and vengeful and furious. I think it made you feel small and inadequate. I think it gave you skin irritations and nervous tics. I think it kept you up nights and

made you count the days until you could return to the safe, bourgeois comfort of Rome. That's what I think. I think you're hiding behind historical inaccuracies and outright lies, Mr. Pilate. I think that you're a liar and a fraud. I think that when Jesus was pur before you, you did not see a god or a prophet, you did not see a lunatic or an innocent, you didn't even see a human being. I think, Mr. Pilate, that what you saw before you than morning was just one more Jew, and you didn't hesitate. Why would you? ... You didn't wash your hands, Pontius Pilate — History did it for you. Isn't that true? (Pilate rises.)

PILATE. I think I've had enough here. CUNNINGHAM. If you were a man, Pilate — you'd own up to the truth!

PILATE. The truth?! Whose truth you talkin' about, Red? The truth is I was made a saint in the Ethiopian church! The truth is I was named a Martyr for the Christian church in 348 A.D. That's the damn "truth"!

CUNNINGHAM. A Christian marry?

PILATE. Did I sturrer, girlie?

CUNNINGHAM. Well, I guess, that's what they mean about history being "a lie agreed to."

PILATE. A "lie"?! Whatchu know about what's a lie and what's the truth?! Whatchu know about my history?! All's you got to go on is some book written four different ways by four different Jews wasn't even there in the first place! And whatchu know about my life AFTER Palestine? Whatchu know about what I mighta did or didn't do when I got back home to the motherland? That's right — you don't know jack — do you? They didn't write down that part of the story, did they? Shir — I'm a tell you something: You and your presumptuous nature reminds me more and more of my ex-wife Rhonda every minute — and believe me that ain't no compliment! Yes, I met that Jesus boy — seemed like a fine fellow! He dressed like a hobo and smelled like a goat, but give the boy a shave and a shower, and he woulda been basically alright. And I'll tell you something else: Unlike Judas, that Nazarene boy had character. He didn't come up on me begging and groveling — crying like a bitch. He faced me like a man, like a Roman almost, and that impressed me. I was willing to just have him be clubbed in his head for a couple hours — redirect his youthful energies — but them Jews — they wasn't havin' none a chat! You can say what you want to, think what you want to, but them Jews was fixin' to pitch a fit until that boy

was served up for lunch like chicken in the skillet! And they had the numbers on us that weekend — two hundred thousand strong converging on the city for they high holidays and ready to rumble at the drop. I did what I had to do to preserve the damn peace! Why?! Cuz that was my damn job! I did my job! I did my damn job and now you wanna call me a liar? Question my veracity and my character?! I am a Roman' lady! One hundred percent, 24/7, we never close! Underneath my ball sack is stamped: VERITAS! And that means TRUTH! And that means my honor is defined by my integrity and my integrity is defined by my truth! And I defy you — here and now — to produce one shred of evidence to support your wild and defamatory claims! Shir! You better check the resume two times before you start tryin' ta sweep your dirt under a Roman's rug! I am clean like Dove and ready for love, missy! I live in heaven! Where you live at, girlfriend? Shir! I'll tell you what though: When you get your head straightened out, gimme a call some time if you want to — I'll take you down to the aqueduct for a pizza and a tussle. Show you my tattoos ... Any more questions?

CUNNINGHAM. I think, Mr. Pilate, that you've told us all we need to know.

PILATE. Okay then, I'm a roll out, now, boo — work on my short game.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. The witness is excused. (As Pilate struts off magisterially —.)

PILATE. Hail Caesar, baby! (El-Fayoumy rises.)

EL-FAYOUMY. Your Excellency! "Heg-e-mon!" Just one question if I may?

PILATE. What's that?

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes ... I wonder if you would tell the court — Heg'e — the following: If indeed Judas Iscariot came to your tent to recant — and I'm not saying he did or didn't — and by the way, the only Gospel that says *anything* at all about Judas recanting is Matthew, so it's three against one and the one in question was not only a Greek, but a drunken Greek and a card cheat — but anyway — please tell us now if you will please: Good Sir, Heg'e, when Judas came to your tent to allegedly recant, if in fact he did, which, I am in no way seeking confirmation of herewith, HOWEVER, if, by chance, the gin-soaked Greek was miraculously correct and Judas did in fact attempt to recant and return the tarnished silver, tell us please — AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT — Heg'e: Did you get the sense or impression that Judas was recanting our

of a genuine REMORSE and concern for Jesus, or, do you think he was seeking to undo the damage out of a neck-saving FEAR of the dire consequences and everlasting repercussions of betraying our rightful and most exalted and just Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the divine Son of Man? (Beat.)

PILATE. I am a man — and Defense Counsel may dispute this — who happens to know something about remorse — personal and otherwise. In my day, I stared into the eyes of perhaps ten thousand accused men and sat in judgement of them. I spared a few, and executed plenty. I sent people to face the whip, the cell, the gallows, and the cross. And I sent a few home as well. Remorse is rare, but when you see it, it is unmistakable. Judas Iscariot had no remorse — his fear left no room for it. His fear was one hundred percent ego-driven and self-serving. One hundred percent panic. Zero percent remorse. If you believe nothing else — believe that.

EL-FAYOUMY. "Hege" — thank you. Thank you indeed. (*The gavel bangs.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next witness! (*Cunningham rises.*)

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, Defense reconjures Satan to the stand.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Lou, you can come in now ... Bailiff! Go fetch him! Go' fetch Satan!

BAILIFF. Alone?
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Go! (*Satan enters, quite perturbed.*) Ah!
... Have a seat, Lou.

SATAN. I want to file a formal fuckin' complaint, Frank!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Aw, this ain't about the Turkey roll in the cafeteria again, now is it Lou?

SATAN. No, Frank, this is not about the Turkey roll in the cafeteria. What this is abour, Frank, is I recognized a couple of your court officers at the vending machines, okay? Ask me how I recognized them, Frank.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Lou —
SATAN. No! Don't you fuckin' "Lou" me — you little fag — God's been fuckin' stealing souls again, hasn't he?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. El-Fayoumy! Escort the jury out!

EL-FAYOUMY. Yes. Right this way, please. (*As El-Fayoumy leads them out.*)

SATAN. (To burch.) And you! Honeywell! You're on my fuckin' list, Hayesd — so don't expect any last-second reprieves. Shorts and tank tops, Stretch — pack light! (*They exit.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. This is unacceptable behavior, Lou. SATAN. Don't tell me what's unacceptable — Those two court officers were mine, Frank — their souls in hell, safe and secure! What? I don't got enough to contend with? — Now I gotta deal with God cruisin' the barnyards of hell poaching condemned poultry like some kind of silver fox-railed thief in the fuckin' night? This is bullshit, Frank, and you know it — and I'm not leaving here this time without my satisfaction — so you better do something about it right fucking now!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Do something like what?

SATAN. Number one: I'm not testifying at any more of these circle-jerks no more — I'm not some wind-up doll to be summoned and dismissed like a fuckin' toy. Number two: I want two souls before I leave here today — so take a memo, and pass it on upstairs. I'll take you and whoever.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Me?

SATAN. Yeah, you. I shoulda claimed you off the dung heap after Lee's surrender ... And I wan't some Darvon ... And a tall bourbon neat. (*Re: Cunningham.*) What the fuck are you looking at?

CUNNINGHAM. I'd like to start my questioning.

SATAN. Why? You got some place you gotta be, disfrag? CUNNINGHAM. No. When you're done crying, just let me know.

SATAN. Um, I'm sorry — maybe you can clear this up for me — but, is today "Fuck with Someone Who Can Rip Your Heart out Through Your Miserable Dried up Cunt Day"? Is that what day this is? Cuz unless I'm mistaken, I'm pretty sure that today is not that day.

CUNNINGHAM. Today is your day to answer my questions — when you're through behaving like a petulant child, that is. JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham, I am directing you to hit the off switch on them flapping gums of yours until further notice! And you, Lou, with all due respect to your stature and station — could ya cut me a break here, please?!

SATAN. Frank, I've always been good to you — JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. — and I to you — is that not so? Now listen: Your complaint is duly noted and will be kicked up upstairs at the conclusion of today's testimony, okay? Now I need to call the damn jury back in here. And what I need to know — from the both of youse — is that when I move to do so, that you two will conduct yourselves with a deportment in adjustment to the solemn-

nity of these proceedings. Now, can I have your words on that?

CUNNINGHAM. I'm ready to proceed, your Honor.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. With civility?

CUNNINGHAM. If I'm met with civility.

SATAN. You know what, Cunningham; all those excuses you got wedged between that dubious cleavage of yours: your mother, the bulimia, the herpes, the booze, the abortions, the rape, the bipolar pharmaceutical adventures, the twin suicide attempts and the abject failures at every relationship you ever attempted — all those things do nothing to band-aid the simple fact that there comes a time when the world stops rewarding potential — and when that time came for you, you threw yourself the world's biggest pity party and dedicated the rest of your short, pathetic, inconsequential life to finding fault everywhere fuckin' else but in the return gaze of your own cosmetically altered reflection. Okay?

EL-FAYOUMY. Satan, please — you are perhaps out of bounds here!

SATAN. El-Fayoumy, on a good day, your cock measures three and a half inches erect, and it goes off on a hair trigger if you so much as sneeze ... Worse than that, you're a flatterer, and your love of God is utterly false — as is your hair color. And the sole reason you're so hot for this nasty train wreck over here is because you're addicted to tragedy and punishment — not because you *think* you're a piece of shit, but because, El-Fayoumy, the truth is: Your self-diagnosis is correct: You're a bag of hot air and a weakling — and you will never ever be loved. (*To Cunningham.*) You'll never be loved either, Cunningham, and that's because you're incapable of giving it — but you already knew that about yourself, didn't you? (*To Judge.*) You can bring in the jury now, Frank. Never let it be said that the Prince of Lies stood in the way of truth.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (*To Satan.*) No more outbursts.

SATAN. I'm a buddha floating on a lily pad.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. (*Calling out.*) El-Fayoumy — bring 'em on in!

EL-FAYOUMY. (*Entering with Bailiff.*) Uh ... Sir yes sir! (*To jury.*) Take your seats, please — do not tarry.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Counselor, you may begin.

CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Satan —

SATAN. I apologize for my earlier behavior, Counselor — I had some bad fish at lunch.

CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Satan, you've had a long-standing feud with God, correct?

SATAN. No, I love God.

CUNNINGHAM. You love God?

SATAN. Very much. God made me.

CUNNINGHAM. Okay, you say God made you — SATAN. God did make me — it says so in the Bible. CUNNINGHAM. I know about the Bible, Mr. Satan. It also says in the bible, in ... in Matthew I believe, in Matthew, it, it says, "A good tree can't bear bad fruit," correct?

SATAN. Correct ... CUNNINGHAM. So are you saying that you are good? Or are you saying that God is bad?

SATAN. I would never say that God is bad.

CUNNINGHAM. So then, are you telling this court that you're good?

SATAN. I don't know — are you good, Counselor?

CUNNINGHAM. That's not what I asked you!

SATAN. I'm sorry.

CUNNINGHAM. Just answer the question.

SATAN. I don't believe in good and bad. What I believe in is truth.

CUNNINGHAM. Fine: According to Job and Nehemiah, God created you in the first three days. True?

SATAN. True.

CUNNINGHAM. You were an "angel."

SATAN. True.

CUNNINGHAM. You were present when God created earth.

SATAN. True.

CUNNINGHAM. Then God created man and gave *him* — *not you* — dominion over the earth. True?

SATAN. True.

CUNNINGHAM. You were; in fact, ordered by God to serve man. True?

SATAN. True.

CUNNINGHAM. According to Genesis and Ezekiel, you then tempted Eve to eat the apple in order to prove to God that He had made an error in giving man dominion over the earth. At which point, according to Luke, you then "fell from heaven like lightning" and became God's adversary. And ever since that day, you have competed for souls with God in order to try to prove the point that man is not worthy to rule over the earth. Isn't that true, Mr. Satan?

SATAN. I don't compete with God. God competes with himself.

CUNNINGHAM. That's not what I asked you.

SATAN. I'm trying to answer your question —

CUNNINGHAM. No you are not trying to answer my question!

SATAN. Your Honor, I'm trying to form a response here —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Let him answer, Cunningham!

EL-FAYOUMY. Your Honor, it does seem to me —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Quiet! (To Satan.) Proceed.

SATAN. Thank you. Look, I didn't make you people, God did, okay? But, there was a design flaw in the creation: He gave you free will — and to balance that out, you were designed to self-correct. But, unlike the "free will" muscle, the "self-correct" muscle is not a particular favorite of the homo sapiens. I'd say "self-correct" falls somewhere between "colonoscopy" and "firing squad" on most people's holiday "wish" lists. At any rate, the truth is: I don't have to actively compete for human souls — I don't have to lull or flatter or tempt or deceive — because with God at the helm and you people running around wreaking havoc: I'll be honest, I spend most of my time on a sofa watching one-hour dramas on HBO.

CUNNINGHAM. And what? Getting tossed out of heaven — that didn't bother you at all?

SATAN. There's a concept, Cunningham, called "playing the cards you are dealt" — one can either accept that concept, or, one can slowly lose their mind, heart and soul. I'd like to be more helpful to you here, but really, that's what it all comes down to.

CUNNINGHAM. Is that so?

SATAN. I'm just a fallen angel tryin' ta keep my dick hard in a monotheistic society — anything else you wanna ask?

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, this witness is clearly lying — I move his entire testimony be struck from the record.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I'll not allow that, sorry — you injured him, what comes out of his mouth is your responsibility.

CUNNINGHAM. But he's obviously lying!

SATAN. You oughta expand your consciousness, Counselor.

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Unless you have another question, Cunningham, I suggest you step down now.

CUNNINGHAM. But —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Forward or back! You've been instructed, now whar'li it be? (A small beat.)

CUNNINGHAM. Why do you love God, Mr. Satan?

SATAN. What's not to love?

CUNNINGHAM. Specifically, Mr. Satan! What specifically do you love about God?

SATAN. I don't know where to begin.

CUNNINGHAM. Pick a spot!

SATAN. I love God because He is all-powerful and all-forgiving. I love God because his justice is perfect. I love God because God loves me.

CUNNINGHAM. God loves you?

SATAN. Very much. Gift basket at Christmas — Hallmark greetings on all the major holidays.

CUNNINGHAM. Stop it! If God loves you, then why did he throw you out of his kingdom?!

SATAN. He didn't throw me out — I left.

CUNNINGHAM. That's not what it says in the Bible!

SATAN. Yeah, they fudged that part, you're right — but that's because you people really only respond to fear and threat — if they told you straight up that there was no lock to the gates of heaven then you'd have no incentive at all to even try to be halfway decent.

CUNNINGHAM. In other words, God lied!

SATAN. God didn't write the Bible — you do know that, right?

CUNNINGHAM. Of course I know that!

SATAN. Then why would you say that God lied?

CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Satan — does God love Judas Iscariot? Yes or no?

SATAN. God loves everybody.

CUNNINGHAM. And yet Judas is in hell — so what use is God's love to Judas if my client is allowed to languish in damnation?

SATAN. Your client is free to leave whenever he wants to — in fact, I wish he would — I could use the room.

CUNNINGHAM. That's not true and you know it!

SATAN. Look, maybe you should sit down and catch your breath — CUNNINGHAM. — The real truth is that God's love for us is conditional — isn't that right? You failed to meet God's conditions, and he threw you in the trash! Judas failed — and he's in a catatonic stupor!

SATAN. Your client succumbed to despair —

CUNNINGHAM. Yes! And if human despair is so powerful as to render God powerless over it, then, what does that say about God?! It says one of two things, Mr. Satan: Either God's not all-powerful and therefore useless — or — God's love is conditional which renders that love false and unworthy! Which one is it?

and Park having dinner with Ellen Barkin and Ron Perlman ... Right now, I'm on Lafayette and Astor waiting to hit you up for change so I can get high. I'm taking a walk through the Rose Garden with George Bush. I'm helping Donald Rumsfeld get a good night's sleep ... I was in that cave with Osama, and on that plane with Mohammed Atta ... And what I want you to *know* is that your work has barely begun. And what I want you to *trust* is the efficacy of divine love if practiced consciously. And what I need you to *believe* is that if you hate who I love that you do not know me at all. And make no mistake, "Who I Love" is every last one. I am every last one. People ask of me: Where are you? Where are you? ... Verily I ask of you to ask yourself: Where are *you*? Where are *you*? Judas. (*No response.*) Judas. (*Beat.*)

JUDAS. Who's that?

JESUS. Is it ever anybody else, Judas? (*Pause.*) I miss you.

JUDAS. Uh-huh.

JESUS. I miss you, Judas. (*Jesus lays a hand on him.*)

JUDAS. DON'T FUCKIN' TOUCH ME!

JESUS. Judas.

JUDAS. I SAID TAKE YOUR FUCKIN' HANDS OFF ME — TAKE 'EM OFF!

JESUS. I'm sorry. I'm —

JUDAS. — JUST BACK OFF MY GRILL, MAN! BACK OFF!

JESUS. I'm sorry,

JUDAS. BACK OFF MORE!

JESUS. I'm sorry. (*Pause.*) Judas: If a thousand strangers spit on me and kick me as they pass, I will smile. But if the brother of my heart gives me only a passing hard look, then Judas — I will not sleep that night, nor sleep — at all — 'till he will let me love him again.

JUDAS. NO!!!

JESUS. No, what?

JUDAS. No more fuckin' fortune cookies, that's what! You wanna say something, I can't stop you — you wanna apologize, fine, apologize and go, just — for once — speak like a normal fuckin' person! JESUS. I'm not a normal person Judas and I'm not here to apologize. I am who I am and nor whar you demand me to be. I'm always going to be who I am and whar I am, and when have you ever heard me deliver my message any differently, Judas? When?

JUDAS. I ... Just, go away.

JESUS. I won't go away.

JUDAS. Well, that'd be a first.

SATAN. Cunningham, please don't take this personally, but your father never really loved you or wanted you, right? And the only reason your mother didn't abort you was because she was afraid of scarring — I think she told you that once, didn't she —

CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Satan! —

SATAN. — Just because your parents resented you doesn't mean that God does.

CUNNINGHAM. — Mr. Satan, I asked you a direct question and I am demanding from you a direct answer!

SATAN. The direct answer is that you are completely wrong.

CUNNINGHAM. Is God powerless or spineful — I am ordering you to answer!

SATAN. (*Nar unkindly;*) You're powerless and spineful, Cunningham — nor God.

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor, he's not answering!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Whaddya want me to do abour it?

CUNNINGHAM. But he's not answering!

SATAN. Open your heart to God, Cunningham.

CUNNINGHAM. Shut up! (*To Judge.*) Your Honor?!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. I suggest you step down, Cunningham.

CUNNINGHAM. But I'm not finished!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Then finish!

CUNNINGHAM. But your Honor, this isn't fair!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. It is what it is, Cunningham!

CUNNINGHAM. But your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Cunningham —

CUNNINGHAM. Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. What, Cunningham? What?! (*Beat.*)

CUNNINGHAM. (*To Satan.*) You're a fuckin' liar!

SATAN. I'm truly sorry you feel that way. (*Pause.*)

CUNNINGHAM. ... Nothing further.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. El-Fayoumy: cross? (*El-Fayoumy surveys Cunningham, then Satan, then back to Cunningham.*)

EL-FAYOUMY. No cross. No.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. You're excused.

SATAN. Thanks, Frank. (*To the lawyers.*) Counselors: You availed yourselves as expected: And by the way, El-Fayoumy, you're completely wrong too. I'll be in touch (*And he is gone.*)

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD. Next witness! (*Blackout. A beat.*) Jesus makes his way to Judas. (*He speaks to us:*)

JESUS. Right now, I am in Fallujah. I am in Darfur. I am on 63rd

EXHIBIT 1
Part 7
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

JESUS. I have never gone away. Judas ... Look at me. (*Judas does*) I love you, Judas. And all I want — all I want — is to be not just near you — but WITH you.

JUDAS. Shoulda thought of that before.

JESUS. Before what?

JUDAS. Just get the fuck outta here, okay?

JESUS. Judas —

JUDAS. Don't fuckin' Judas me — you're not wanted here, okay, Mr. Fuckin' Above It All!

JESUS. I'm not above it all — I'm right here in it, don't you see that?

JUDAS. And don't you get that I don't fuckin' care?

JESUS. You think your suffering is a one-way street? It's not! It's the exact opposite of not!

JUDAS. You got a lot of fuckin' nerve — JESUS. — and you've got no nerve at all! Where's your heart in all this, Judas? You think you were with me for any other reason than that? If was your heart, Judas. You were *all* heart. You were my heart! Don't you know that?

JUDAS. I'll tell you what I know. I watched you trip over your own dusky feet to heal the sick, the lame, the unclean — any two bit stranger subdued their fuckin' toe! When some lowly distant relative — too cheap to buy enough wine for his own fuckin' wedding suddenly runs out of booze — no problem, you just "Presto Change-O" — and it was fuckin' Miller time in Oj Caanan again, wasn't it, bro? But when I fuckin' needed you — where the fuck were you, hub?

JESUS. Judas —

JUDAS. You forgave Peter and bullshit Thomas — you knocked Paul of Tarsus off a horse — you raised Lazarus from the fuckin' dead — but me? Your "heart"? ... What about me? What about me, Jesus? Huh? You juss you just — I made a mistake! And if that was wrong, then you should have told me! And if a broken heart wasn't sufficient reason to hang, THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME THAT TO!

JESUS. Don't you think ... that if I knew that it would have changed your mind ... that I would have? (*Beat,*)

JUDAS. All I know is that you broke me.unfixable — and that I'm here ... And, you wanna know when you delivered your message differently? At the Temple, Jesus — that's when. And you were beautiful there. And you left there three inches taller! And we all

saw it. I loved you. That's all I did. And that's the truth. And now I'm here.

JESUS. Judas — What if I were to tell you that you are not here? That you are with me in my kingdom even now, and that you have been there since the morning of my ascension and that you have never left? (*Judas spits in Jesus face,*)

JUDAS. That's what I think about you. (*Jesus doesn't wipe it off,*)

JESUS. I love you, Judas. (*Beat,*) I love you.

JUDAS. *Just stop!*

JESUS. Don't you see me here, Judas?

JUDAS. *I see a lot of things!*

JESUS. You see a lota things?

JUDAS. *That's right!*

JESUS. How about him? Do you see him? (*Satan appears,*) Do you know him? Call unto him. Touch him. He is not there. Because he does not exist, Judas. Rather they must conjure him, and still he is but a vapor blown away by a hummingbird's breath. He is false. He is a lie. He is not real. Touch him, go ahead.

JUDAS. I don't wanna touch him.

JESUS. Stand up, Judas.

JUDAS. You know I can't do that!

JESUS. No. What I know — is that you can.

JUDAS. Get the fuck over yourself!

JESUS. Will you feed my lambs, Judas? ... Will you take care of my little sheep? ... Will you feed my lambs?

JUDAS. "Feed your lambs."

JESUS. You know exactly what I'm asking you.

JUDAS. Go away!

JESUS. If you don't love me, Judas — then you're gonna have to look me in my eyes and say it.

JUDAS. I don't love you.

JESUS. If you don't love me, then why are you here?

JUDAS. Go!

JESUS. Judas! ... Judas, don't you know what would happen the very instant you got down on your knees? They shoulda buried me standing up — cuz I been on my knees my whole life! You left me.

JESUS. I'm right here.

JUDAS. I would have never believed that you could have left me.

JESUS. I never left you.

JUDAS. That you didn't love me.

JESUS. I do love you.
JUDAS. Why... didn't you make me good enough... so that you could've loved me?

JESUS. ... Please take my hands, Judas. Please.

JUDAS. Where are they?

JESUS. Right here.

JUDAS. I can't see them.

JESUS. They're right here.

JUDAS. Where are you going?

JESUS. I'm right here.

JUDAS. Don't leave me!

JESUS. I'm here.

JUDAS. I can't hurt ...

JESUS. I love you, Judas.

JUDAS. I can't ...

JESUS. Please stay.

JUDAS. I can't hurt ...

JESUS. Please love me, Judas.

JUDAS. I can't. (*Judas is frozen again. A long beat. Butch Honeywell enters Judas' lair with a twelve-pack of Canadian beer. Butch looks around, clears his throat, takes off his cap.*)

BUTCH HONEYWELL. Um, uh, Mr. Iscariot? Uh, Mr. Iscariot; I uh, I don't know if you can hear me, but, I just — I just wanted to introduce myself, if, if I could. I'm, uh, Burch Honeywell. I was the foreman of the jury at your trial there ... and ... well: We found you guilty, Mr. Iscariot ... I'm real sorry about that ... Oh, Uh ... I brought you a twelve-pack of beer. Actually, guess it's a five-pack now, but, anyway ... Here: I don't know if you drink beer, but it's good stuff ... Anyways, I'll just set it down right beside you right here ... Okay then. (*Butch goes to leave, then stops.*) So ... I think I'm dead, Mr. Iscariot, and, I'm a little concerned about that cuz I don't think my soul's ready for judgment, but nobody else has so far corroborated that I'm dead so, I just don't bring it up, but, the fact is that if this is a dream, it's the longest damn dream I've ever endured — and really, I just ... I really miss my wife, Mr. Iscariot. Is it okay if I tell you that? (*Beat. Butch pops a beer. Sips. Beat.*) I remember, I was with these two girls that night when I first seen my wife, Mr. Iscariot. It was a party at Jimmy Rayburn's house cuz Jimmy's momma worked 'till midnight so he had the house to himself and you know, me and these two girls — Suzie Heller and Della Mae Robbins — we were just talkin', smokin' cigarettes, out on Mis-

Rayburn's deck away from the party. I was depressed over sumpthin' or other — prolly cuz school was ending — plus I had just been in the school play — I had played Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* — it was the first time I had ever acted, and everyone said I was real good. But now, the play was over, and school was almost over, and, for the part in the play, they had given me this real short haircut — like 1940s style — and my ears, Mr. Iscariot, I don't know if you can notice, but, they stuck out a little bit, so, with the short haircut and all, I was feeling a little self-conscious and dumb, and, anyway, just not too cheery ... So anyways, I'm out there on the deck talkin' to Suzie and Della — and all a the sudden I see this girl inside at the party. She had, I guess, just arrived, and she had on a red jacket, it was a cheerleading jacket from the high school just across the state line in Virginia — the Red Raiders — and I remember, all I saw was blonde hair, and a red jacket, and this smile that was — even from a distance — just kinda electrifying to the heart, ya know? 'Bout a minute later, the sliding door to the deck opens, and this girl, she comes out by herself, and she's heading towards us — turns out she's friends with Della from back in the day, from, I don't know, Girl Scouts, Brownies, sumpthin like that. Anyways, she walks over — and she was so beautiful, that I remember thinkin' to myself — and this is exactly word for word what I thought — "I ain't even gonna bother talkin' to this girl." So she comes over, says hello, and I just excuse myself right off the deck and head back inside, fixin' ta say my Goodbyes and skedaddle ... And anyways, I try to leave, but then, Jimmy handed me a beer, and someone else started passin' a bottle of Rebel Yell, and before you know it, you know, bong hits and whatnot, and anyways, a little later I'm sittin' on the couch when this girl — my future wife — she just comes up to me by herself and she says, "I saw you in that play the other night. You made me cry" ... Two days later, we went out on a date ... On the way back, I was driving her home, and we passed by this house where my friend Dave Hoghe used to live who had died ... I hadn't been by his house since he passed. The family didn't live there no more. But when I saw the house, I got struck with this feeling, and I asked her if she wouldn't mind if we just pulled up in front of that house and just sat for a moment. She said, "Sure." So I parked, and we just sat in the car for a while. Quiet. Not sayin' nothin'. And before I knew it, Mr. Iscariot, I was tearing up — cuz this kid, he had been a real good friend of mine, ya know — and then, I just started crying. Mr. Iscariot, I couldn't help myself and I couldn't

shut it off. And I was real embarrassed, and she just, she just held me while tears and snor and wharnot just poured outta me and on to her little white sweater ... And she didn't mind about that ... She didn't mind at all ... At some point, I drove her home, and we got to her door, and we started to kiss, and, well, God, it was like, I'll tell ya — it was like peaches and dynamite ... And before I left, I apologized to her about the crying and all, and she said, "Don't be a jack-ass, Butch Honeywell," and I smiled, but then I went on to explain my meaning, which was — you know — if you want a girl to think you're sensitive or something, then maybe taking her to the house of your dead friend and crying all over her pretty white sweater might be a good way to pull it off, and, you know what she said, Mr. Iscariot? ... She looked at me for a good long while with them all the way dazzling eyes of hers and then she just said, "Well, if it was a trick ... then I'm tricked" ... Three years into our marriage, I took a job teaching at the state college — I was popular with the students cuz I found a way to make 'em wanna learn. One night, at the end of the semester, they took me out for beers. I ended up having an assignation with one of the co-eds — young lady named Lucy. And I went home that night, got into bed next to my wife drunk as a skunk and I remember, before I passed out, I was lookin' at her. I always liked to look at her when she was sleeping cuz she always looked so good. I had a little nickname for her, I used call her "my little baby dinosaurus" cuz that's how she looked like when she slept — like one of those cute cartoon little baby dinosaurs — like a little brontosaurus, but cute ... Anyways, when I woke up the next morning she was still sleepin', and what I had done the night before came back to me, and I looked at my wife, and, boy, she looked exactly the same as always, but, somehow, she just wasn't my little baby dinosaurus no more, ya know? And she woke up, and she didn't know nuthin' bout nuthin', and everything was exactly the same as if the night before had never happened, except, it wasn't the same, and I knew it. And I had no idea why I had done what I done. But I had done it. And it couldn't be changed. My girl, she got up and fixed blueberry french toast with maple walnut pecans. I didn't eat it. No way I coulda eaten it. Nuthin' was ever the same after that morning. Mr. Iscariot, ya know? I tried a lot of things to make it better, the only thing that did was more beer and women ... Do you know who W.H. Auden was, Mr. Iscariot? W.H. Auden was a poet who once said, "God may reduce you on Judgment Day to tears of shame reciting by heart the poems you

would have written had your life been good" ... She was my poem, Mr. Iscariot. Her and the kids. But mostly ... her ... You cashed in silver Mr. Iscariot, but me? Me, I threw away gold ... That's a fact. That's a natural fact. (*A long beat. Jesus sighs, takes off his shirt, plunges it in the bucket, rinses, and begins to wash Judas' feet. Jesus washes meticulously and with care. He washes. And washes. Perhaps the water is mixed with tears. As lights fade.*)

End of Play

PROPERTY LIST

Bucker (JESUS)
Writ (CUNNINGHAM)
Glasses, pen (BAILIFF)
Cigarettes, lighter (LORETTA)
Spinning top (JUDAS)
Headphones (BAILIFF)
Silver (JUDAS)
Twelve-pack of Canadian beer (BURTCH)

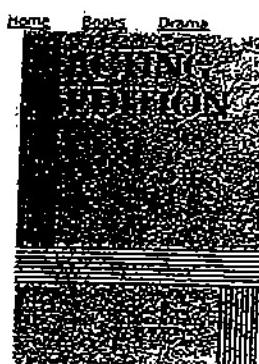
SOUND EFFECTS

Voice, noises, rumblings
Trumpets, dancing camels, music

EXHIBIT F

Barnes & Noble.com - Books: The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, by Stephen Adly Guirgis, Paperback

25/06/05 C: PL



The Last Days of Judas Iscariot (Paperback)

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Synopsis

Set in a time-bending, dandy comic world between heaven and hell, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* reexamines the plight and fate of the New Testament's most infamous and unrepentant sinner.

Variety

Stephen Adly Guirgis has written a real jaw-dropper. .expressionistic fantasy... raw language and flamboyantly street-smart characters... his imagination is dazzling and his command of language dazzlingly striking.

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THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

BY STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS

PUBLISHER: FABER AND FABER

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot: A Play by Stephen Adly Guirgis (Paperback)

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all sellers](#)[FIND IT IN OUR STORES](#)
Enter a zip code[Find](#)[Overview](#) [Editorial Reviews](#) [Customer Reviews](#) [Full Product Details](#)**Synopsis**

From one of our most admired playwrights, "an ambitious, complicated and often laugh-out-loud religious debate" (Toby Zinman, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*)

Set in a time-bending, satirically imagined world between Heaven and Hell, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* is a philosophical meditation on the conflict between divine mercy and human free will that takes a close look at the eternal damnation of the Bible's most notorious sinner. This latest work from the author of *Our Lady of 121st Street* "shares many of the traits that have made Mr. Guirgis a playwright to reckon with in recent years: a fierce and queasy mind that refuses to settle for glib answers, a gift for identifying with life's losers and an unforced eloquence that finds Christian existential pain, which wonders at the paradoxes of faith" (Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*).

Biography

Stephen Adly Guirgis's previous plays—*Our Lady of 121st Street, Jesus Hopped the Hoodoo* and *In Arabia, We'd All Be Kings*—were published by Faber in an omnibus edition in 2003. He lives in New York City.

[More About the Author](#)**Customer Reviews**Number of Reviews: 1
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THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

STEPHEN ADLY GUIGRIS

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by Stephen Adly Guirgis (Author)

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TOTAL P.001

MICHELE PORTO STINE
ATTORNEY AT LAW
783 SLEEPY HOLLOW RD.
BRIARCLIFF MANOR, NY 10510
TELEPHONE (914) 631-7012

September 25, 2007

J. Buzetti
The Gersh Agency
41 Madison Avenue, Suite 3300
New York, NY 10010

RE: Stephen A. Guirgis "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot"

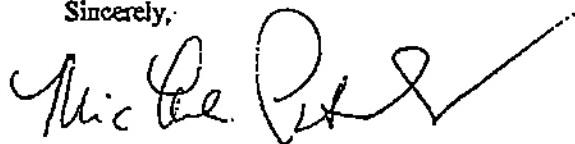
Dear Mr. Buzetti

I represent Guy Michaels, the author of the book, "JUDAS ON APPEAL", (copyright 1999). Your client's above mentioned play, written and produced in 2005, seems to be an infringement upon my client's copyright.

There are at least eight specific points that are written in Mr. Michaels' book and that also appear in this play. These eight points were never mentioned in the Bible. For example, both story lines take place at a hearing in a court room in present time.

Please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss this important matter.

Sincerely,



P.001/001
Q.001/001

OCT-23-2007 11:12 IFAX faxesrecieved@srda.com AKAM ASSOCIATES INC.
10/23/2007 11:12 IFAX faxesrecieved@srda.com

FROM :

FAX NO. :

Dec. 19 2007 07:02PM PT

SCHRECK ROSE DAPELLO ADAMS & HURWITZ LLP

JAMES S. ADAMS
DAVID A. BERLIN
JOSEPH J. DAPELLO
ISAAC DUNHAM
ALLISON EHRETT
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ALAN D. STACKS
JOSHUA M. SANDLER
IEA SCHRECK

EMERSON L. URUNG
OF COUNSEL

**ADMITTED IN NY

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
TELEPHONE 212-823-1844
FACSIMILE 212-823-2102
WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL
212-823-2014

November 29, 2007

BY FEDERAL EXPRESS

Michele Ponto Stinc, Esq.
783 Sleepy Hollow Rd.
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

Re: Guy Michaels / "The Last Days of Judas Iscariot" /
Stephen A. Guirgis (531-003)

Dear Ms. Stinc:

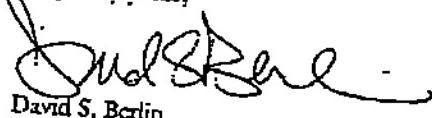
I am in receipt of your letter to John Buzzetti dated September 25, 2007.

Your letter refers to "eight specific points that are written in Mr. Michaels' book and that also appear in this play," yet you only mention one point: that the storylines of Mr. Guirgis' play and your client's novel take place at a hearing in a courtroom in present time.

Copyright protection extends only to the expression of ideas, not to ideas themselves. The one example you mention contains no expression whatsoever; the time, setting and subject of a work of art are simply facts. Facts are not protectible, and accordingly you have provided no example of an infringement of your client's copyrightable expression.

This letter is sent without prejudice to any of our client's rights in connection with the foregoing matter, all of which are expressly reserved.

Very truly yours,



David S. Berlin

DSB/sm

cc: Mr. Stephen A. Guirgis
Mr. John Buzzetti
Nancy A. Rose, Esq.

1790 BROADWAY NEW YORK NEW YORK 10019

MICHELE PORTO STINE
ATTORNEY AT LAW

753 SLEEPY HOLLOW RD.
BRIARCLIFF MANOR, NY 10510
TELEPHONE (914) 631-5612
FAX (914) 631-5437

December 21, 2007

VIA MAIL

David Berlin, Esq.
Schreck Rose Dapello Adams & Hurwitz LLP
1790 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Re: Guy Michaels/ Stephen Guirgis

Dear Mr. Berlin:

As I have previously mentioned to your firm through written communication (Buzzetti letter dated September 25, 2007) and numerous telephone conversations with Ms. Nancy A. Rose, Esq., my client believes that Stephen Guirgis' play does constitute copyright infringement. Furthermore, the production of this play in California, Texas and Illinois, in light of the notice that Mr. Guirgis has been given by my client, constitutes willful infringement.

One example of the infringement that is included in the complaint presently being prepared, states that the concept of Judas receiving forgiveness by Jesus Christ as set forth in a modern day courtroom scene does not exist in any other literary work. Yet, Mr. Guirgis uses this exact idea as evidenced in page 106 of his script.

This matter should be immediately addressed by all parties concerned. If I do not receive a prompt response, my client is prepared to file suit for copyright infringement in the coming weeks.

Sincerely



EXHIBIT 2
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE

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DVD Footage from Defendants' play

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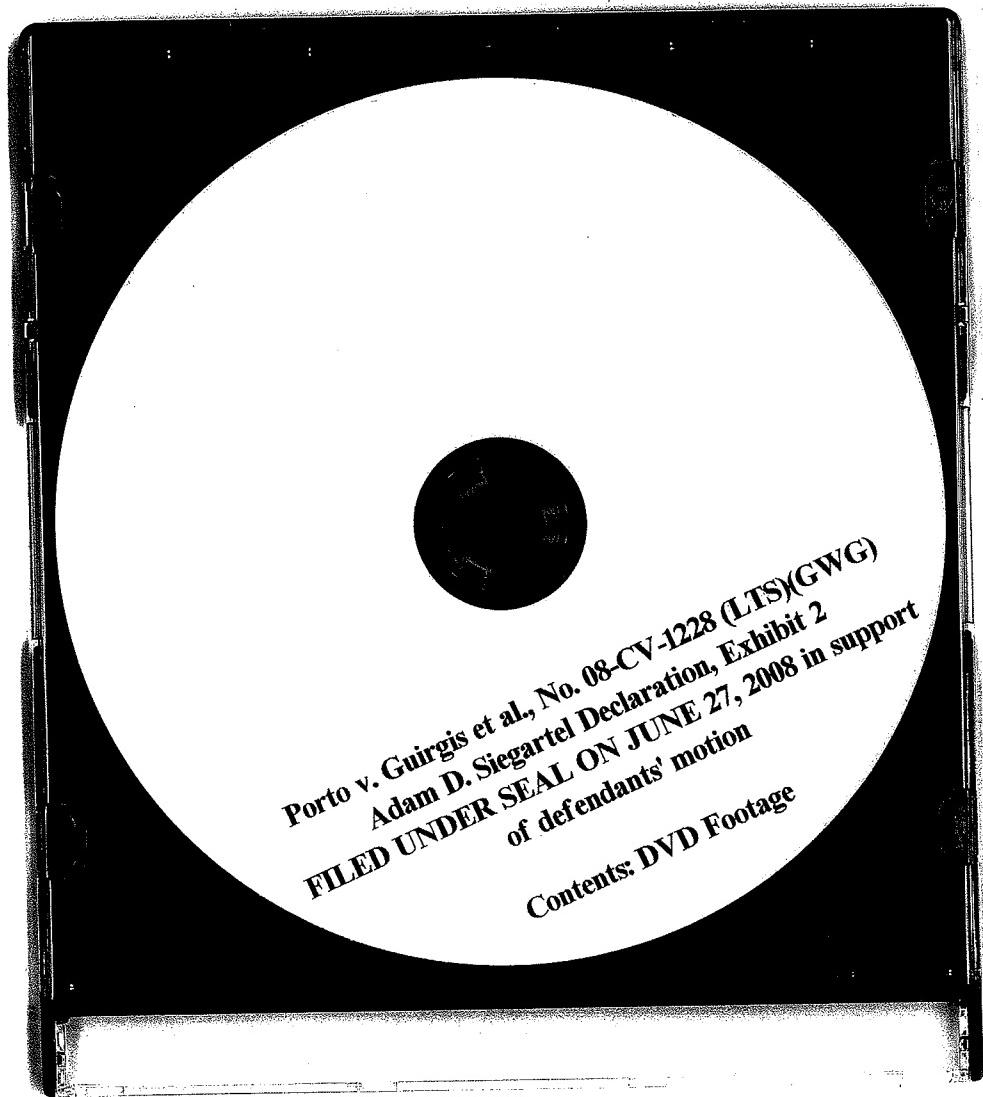


EXHIBIT 3
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION

The Musings Of Sagaverus Topics

An Inquiry Into Truth Judas Iscariot On Trial Satirical Drama in Three Acts

ACT I

Scene 1

A Courtroom

[Stage direction: use the kind of stuff that makes it look like a courtroom.
Put the jury box at stage right.]

Prosecutor: I must protest your honor. The jury members are all gagged and blindfolded. How can they reach a fair verdict under these conditions.

Judge: The jury are all members of the American media counselor, therefore this measure seems appropriate. As you know, faith comes by hearing but men judge by appearances. I'm hoping this extends to accuracy and fairness as well. I don't want them to judge our proceedings but rather to report without slanting it according to their own biases. We'll find out when their published reports are spread all over the planet. Objection noted. Bailiff ... swear the witness.

[Stage direction: in response the judge's remarks, much twisting about, leaning to the left, and vociferous mumbling behind the gags.]

Prosecutor: But your honor

Judge: My order stands counselor. Let's move on.

Bailiff: Raise your left hand and repeat after me. "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth".
For the record, please state your full name.

Witness: Judas Iscariot.

Bailiff: What is your permanent residence?

Witness: Me and my roommate Adolph live in cubicle number 12345666.

Bailiff: Tell us where that cubicle is located.

Witness: Where? In Hell. Where'd you think? Can you believe it ... I knocked off one Jew, actually only fingered him, didn't kill him myself, while ol' Adolph gassed about six million and drew the same sentence as they give me. Don't seem fair, do it?

Prosecutor: Your honor, I object. The Witness is making a speech.

Judge: The Witness will refrain from making speeches and confine himself to answering the question as posed.

Witness: Hey. You can't shut me up. I got a right to say whatever I want.

Judge: Let me warn you Mr. Iscariot. The next outburst of that sort from you is going to get you a penalty for contempt.

Witness: Oh yeah? What penalty is dat?

Judge: Thirty days in Purgatory.

Witness: Well, 'up yours' Judge.

Judge [bangs gavel]: I warned you. Thirty days for contempt.

Witness [grinning, sotto voce]: Thanks Judge. I appreciate it.

Prosecutor: Now, Mr. Iscariot, I am showing to you, may it please the court, a newspaper clipping dated the 7th day of April in the year 2006 CE. In case you don't know what CE means, it stands for 'common era'. We used to you use 'AD' ... you know, for 'Anno Domini', which is Latin for year of the Lord, but this being a court of law we are not allowed to contaminate the public sphere with any reference to any deity who may or may not exist, and so forth.

Returning to the issue at hand, this clipping describes the discovery of an

ancient piece of paper, parchment, or some such writing material, from a book you apparently wrote, or for which you provided the substance, in which you said that the one called Jesus arranged with you to have himself killed. Do you deny this?

Witness: Book. What book. I didn't never write no book. Hell ... oops, 'scuse my language Judge ... and as regards that Latin stuff, I never took no Latin in school. I went to Hebrew school man. We spoke mostly Hebrew and Aramaic. Latin was what them Roman ball busters spoke. We didn't use a calendar that was, howyacallit, common era stuff.

Prosecutor: The title of this book is "The Gospel of Judas". According to experts, the book in question was written around 140 CE. Where, exactly, were you at that time? Do you have an alibi?

Witness: Alibi? You nuts? I was exactly in Hell. Been there since I died. Seems like forever. A long time anyhow. When would I write book? I told you I didn't write no book. I was a man of action. I wanted to overthrow the stinkin' Romans and get 'em off my people's backs. I wasn't into wrtin' stuff. Anybody wrote a book and put my name on it musta been smokin' some strange stuff. Else, they just made stuff up to sell books.

Prosecutor: If you didn't write the book, how did the alleged author or authors, who apparently were members of a club called The Gnostics, get the information about the plot to have Jesus killed so he could escape from his body and acquire eternal life. To whom did you tell these secrets?

Witness: Man, you got your story all f--ked up.

Judge [face red, gavel banging]: I will not tolerate that language in my court Mr. Iscariot. Another thirty days in Purgatory for you.

Witness [smiling broadly]: Yes your Honor. Thank you your honor.

Prosecutor: I object your Honor!

Judge: Object? Object to what?

Prosecutor: The Witness is deliberately provoking you to cite him for contempt so he can spend time in Purgatory instead of going back to, you know, h-e-doubledingdong where he belongs.

Judge: Wouldn't you? You want I should gag him? Let's move on

Counselor. The Witness will answer.

Witness: Well this is how it went down.

This fella Jesus come along. He had these weird powers. Like, he stopped some old broad from bleedin' alla time, made a bunch of pigs run off a cliff. You can imagine how pissed off the pig farmer was. Had it comin'. Jews got nothin' to do with pigs. They shouldn't oughtta been there in the first place. But get this; he could raise people from the dead. Honest to God; cut my tongue out if I'm lyin' about this.. He brought back a dead little girl once. And another time he called a guy named Lazarus outta his tomb after the guy had been buried for days, man. No shit. [aside to Judge "Do I get another 30 days for saying shit in your courtroom your Honor? No, hunh? Just thought I'd try.] So I figured he must be our Messiah; gonna save our people. So I'm hanging around with him and eleven meatballs he picked up along the way, and he's always talkin' about the kingdom and stuff, so it make sense to me he's the guy we need.

Maybe we go up to Rome and put the whammy on ol' Caesar, ya know? Kick some wop ass usin' his special powers. But it turns out he thinks he's the son of God. I can't get him to do nothin' about startin' a revolution. It was a revolting development. All he wants to do is get himself crucified and then he says he's gonna rise from the dead and save everybody who believes. A real nut case. Three years I listen to this stuff and not one word about gettin' rid of the Romans.

Now I know them boys up at the temple, the Sanhedrin gang, are itchin' for a way to bump him off cause he's allatime makin' 'em look bad. Alls they need is somebody to tell 'em where and when to find him. I mean, he's like a ghost or sumpin' ... now you see him, now you don't. The scuttlebutt is the Sanhedrin is willin' to shell out big money to somebody who can finger him. He ain't doin' me no good no how so I axed myself, "why not?" . I could use the dough. We, our gang, used to have some pretty good money from donations, you know, but Jesus was always pissin' it away helpin' people. Easy come, easy go, ya know? He one time let some dumb bitch wash his feet with perfume that cost a small fortune. An' I oughtta get sumpin' out of followin' him and the eleven meatballs around for three years, dontcha think? He was headin' for the cross anyways.

We had this big dinner for Passover; him and me and the gang. So him and his buddy John were sittin' next to each other and whisperin' stuff, then he turns and says to me, "Go on man. Do what you gotta do. He even kissed me g'bye. I knew we was all s'posed to go down to that garden they call

Gethsemane after supper so I went and tol' the Pharisees at the temple, "Give me the moolah an' I'll lead you to him." They did. I did. End of story.

Prosecutor: Really? What did you do with money they paid you?

Witness: Once they had Jesus in their clutches, some fink in the Sanhedrin sent a coupla goombahs after me to get the money back. I screwed 'em good though. I had already stashed the shekels in the temple poor box for temporary safekeeping 'til I could come back for 'em. But I never got back there. The bastards strung me up on a tree and put out the word I done myself in from remorse. Remorse! Ain't that a kick in the head. Damn lyin' hypocrites. Jesus sure had their number. Maybe you'll enjoy this piece of irony; they *did* get the money back when they emptied the poor box.

Prosecutor: So, you didn't buy into his theories about eternal life and so forth?

Witness: Of course not. Not then.

Prosecutor: What do you mean not then? Have you changed your mind?

Witness: You bet your ass I changed my mind. You unnerstand where I live and how long I'm gonna have to stay there? Forever. That's a lonnnng time man. Everybody lives forever. It's just a matter of where you want to do it. This trial is only break I've had since whenever. Even in Hell we heard about how he brought his own self back from the dead. Imagine it!

Prosecutor: Fascinating story Mr. Iscariot. Do you understand what perjury is and the penalties attached thereto if you are found guilty thereof?

Witness: Can't you talk in ordinary words? Perjury? You mean like lyin' under oath?

Prosecutor: Exactly!

Witness: So tell me da penalty.

Prosecutor: Judge, would your Honor advise the Witness of the penalty for perjury.

Judge: If I find you guilty of perjury it means another ten years in

Purgatory for you.

Witness: No shit !?! Judge, I have to confess. I been lyin' my ass off. Send me up, or down, or wherever. Any place but Hell if you don't mind.

Prosecutor: MISTRIAL! I want a mistrial.

Witness: Judge? Could I say somethin'?

Judge: What is it sir?

Witness: I think the jury should get the same perjury sentence you gave me.

Judge: Strikes me as absurd Mr. Iscariot. Would you explain the reasoning behind your request?

Witness: It's simple Judge. As soon as the gags and blindfolds are removed, they will rush out to all their newspaper and television and radio places and start disseminating slanted stories about my testimony, if not downright lies. If they were in Purgatory, they couldn't.

Judge: You've completely missed the point sir. In order to perjure oneself, one must first make an inviolate oath to tell the truth. These media people have sworn to protect their precious sources as well as their own hides, but NEVER have they sworn to tell the TRUTH. Sorry. Can't convict them no matter how much they deserve it.

ACT II
Scene 1
Purgatory

[Stage direction: Judas is in conversation with expired clergyman. Costume in purple and red cassock with big flashy cross and pointy hat.]

Cleric: So what are you in for?

Judas: Perjury during a trial.

Cleric: You lied under oath? Tsk, tsk.

Judas: Nah. I didn't need to lie. The truth is fantastic enough.

Cleric: My goodness. Do you know how long you will be here?

Judas: Oh, yeah. Ten years and sixty days. . If I'm lucky. How about you?

Cleric: Hard to say. I guess I can tell you as a fellow sufferer.

Let's see. There are all those lies I told parishioners; maybe a year's worth of punishment after deducting for indulgences. There's all that money I raised from people struggling to make ends meet so I could live like a prince and lord it over them. You find it hot in here?

I guess I've drawn some time for shuffling those pedophiles around from one parish to another. But, we had to protect the organization at all costs. And I understand from the guidebook that consecrating those homosexual unions is going to cost me, because that wasn't "exactly" by The Book, but it seemed like a good thing to do at the time.

And of course there were those occasional nooners with a few lonely married . women in the flock. Really, it was mercy on my part to lift their spirits along with their skirts. Adultery is really no big deal. How much time you think I'll get for that?

Judas: All those years when you were running a church organization, didn't you tell people that to be saved they must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Cleric: Well, of course I did. That was in the job description when I signed on.

Judas: Did you believe it in your heart?

Cleric: I regarded it as possible, based on the Scriptures, but did not personally experience the kind of thing that Paul was said to have experienced on Damascus Road. I was just doing the best job I could within the rules and regulations.

Judas: Never burned a witch at the stake, huh? Well, I don't know.

If you're lucky you might be here a long time.

Cleric: Lucky? I can hardly wait to get out of here and into heaven. True, I didn't really store up a lot of treasure there, but I'll be happy with my lot whatever it is. I find it quite uncomfortably hot in here, don't you?

Judas: Heaven. You think you're going from here to heaven? I'm afraid you are in for a ruuuude awakening man. This is just the warm-up stage of how you are going to spend eternity in a place where it is reeeeally hot!

ACT III
Scene 1
Hell

Cleric: I had no idea it would be this damned hot down here.

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EXHIBIT 4
SIEGARTEL DECLARATION



*A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine*

The Standard Bearer

Vol. 76; No. 20; September 1, 2000

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"People of Faith 2000" will raise some money and make noise, but it will change little. The message of Easter can change everything.

Judas on Trial

What if Judas were tried today for his betrayal of the Christ? The Greeley (CO) *Tribune* reports such a mock trial which took place at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Greeley:

For a Bible study group at St. Peter's Catholic Church, even 2,000 years doesn't exceed the statute of limitations for a crime.

The group put Judas Iscariot on trial Friday night - and in the process changed the way church members perceive the disciple who betrayed Jesus.

In their play, "The Trial of Judas Iscariot," the group charged Judas with three crimes: crimes against humanity, conspiracy to commit murder and the murder of Jesus of Nazareth.

Complete with opening and closing statements, sworn testimony and objections, the mock trial asked a jury of audience members to determine the guilt or innocence of Christianity's most famous betrayer.

"Throughout history, Judas has been deemed guilty. But guilty of what?" asked Roberta Meehan, who acted as judge in the play. "Betraying a friend is certainly not nice, but it is also not a crime."

Prosecutor Steve Mallett argued that Judas acted in free will and chose to betray Jesus. Judas, he said, traded the life of Jesus for 30 measly pieces of silver.

But defense attorney Thomas Peterson argued Judas was just a pawn in a prophecy. Judas didn't have control over what he did because the crucifixion of Jesus was supposed to happen.

In the end, the jury could not decide whether Judas was guilty or innocent and came back to the mock courtroom as a hung jury.

Audience member Marcella Gallegos understood why the jury couldn't make a decision.

"I had thought Judas existed because the prophecy had to be fulfilled - somebody had to do the dirty work," Gallegos said, "But at the same time, I think Judas had a free will."

It is a sad commentary on man's evaluation of Judas' act that some should consider it excusable and not punishable because it had been eternally determined that Christ must die to deliver His people from their sins. It is the old "conflict" between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. And the old evil is proposed: because God sovereignly determined the cross, therefore Judas cannot be held accountable. But that is not the judgment of Christ - and His judgment is infallible: "And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.... The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:21 & 24).

The "Antichrist"

It is a matter of interest and curiosity: what of the Antichrist? Many theories have been set forth. Stories have